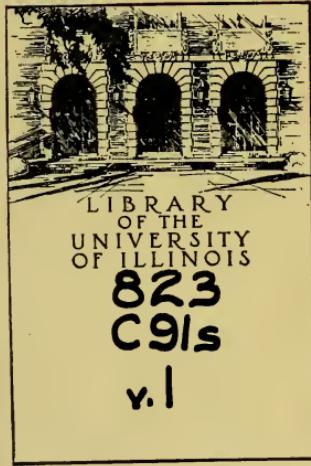




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SIR MICHAEL SCOTT.

VOL. I.

J. B. NICHOLS, 25, PARLIAMENT STREET.

SIR MICHAEL SCOTT,

A ROMANCE,

BY

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

In these far climes, it was my lot
To meet the wondrous Michael Scott ;
A wizard of such dreaded fame,
That when, in Salamanca's cave
Him listed his magic wand to wave,
The bells would ring in Notre Dame !

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON :

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON-STREET.

1828.

PREFACE.

IT is, I confess, with some diffidence and fear that I dismiss this Romance from my hands. To present to my countrymen an image of the poetic beliefs of their ancestors; to gather from history, tale, and tradition, the torn and scattered members of popular superstition, and seek to unite them into one consistent narrative, may be considered by some a presumptuous undertaking or an idle labour; while others may think that beliefs so strange, and superstitions so wild, were worthy only of the darkness to which growing knowledge was consigning them. I hope to find readers more mild, and critics more indulgent; who will think that whatever illustrates the character of our ancestors, or seeks to preserve beliefs which were once common, and fears and feelings formerly popular, deserves to escape from censure, if not to receive praise. In this spirit Shakspeare conceived

two of his Romantic Dramas, and Milton thought when he sung,

"Tis not vain or fabulous,
Though so esteemed by shallow ignorance,
What the sage poets taught by the heavenly muse,
Storied of old in high romantic verse,
Of dire chimeras and enchanted isles,
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to hell,
For such there be; but unbelief is blind.

To those acquainted with our early romances, our historical legends, and our traditional stories, I need not explain how I have used my wild and many-coloured materials. They will recognise, I hope, in every chapter, some portion of old beliefs common to our early literature, and some of the poetic superstitions still current, if not accredited, amongst our peasantry. From materials which belong to our native island, I have endeavoured to create my work.

That evil spirits trouble the earth, that good spirits protect it, and that families and persons are under their influence, is a belief consistent with human nature; and, what is more to the purpose, current amongst mankind. That Fairies lived

among our pastoral hills, that Brownies frequented our hearths, that Witches wrought their spells, that the dead came from the grave to admonish or alarm the living, that Mermaids haunted our bays and isles, and that Spirits appeared as Satan did of old among the children of men, are beliefs yet current in our country, and not likely to die with an imaginative people dwelling on wild hills and in lonely vallies. It is true that the community of a city either feel the influence of such things in a very mild degree, or reject them altogether. A citizen has not been nursed where such beliefs are common, and where tales and songs containing them make part of a fire-side education. As he walks at night he keeps no look out, like Burns the poet, in suspicious places ; there are no haunted glens in his paths, he has no apprehension of a Spirit, and but little of Satan himself. He doubts all, and believes in nothing but rude watchmen and dexterous pickpockets.

The Michael Scott of our legends was a great Magician, who, like the Faustus of German Romance, was personally acquainted with the Spirit

of Evil, but, unlike him, he had the power or the good fortune to vanquish the adversary, and overcome and reduce to servitude all the lesser powers of darkness. Like Merlin too, of old, his knowledge was employed in humbling the powers of evil and of blood, and in doing deeds of kindness to mankind. It is a traditional belief, that James the Fourth escaped from Flodden-field, wandered over the earth, seeking by repentance and acts of gentleness and holiness, to deserve forgiveness of heaven, and that he died after having seen the future importance and glory of our Island revealed in a vision. Were I to quote our historians in support of this belief, I am afraid many would think their evidence added little to the weight of traditional testimony. With this explanation I submit to the Public the following volumes. There is one great Master Spirit in our land, who could have done the Magician, his namesake, justice; but like the Prophet in Egypt, he withheld his inspired rod, and allowed a common wand to attempt the enchantment.

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

SIR MICHAEL SCOTT.

CHAPTER I.

But as they left the dark'ning heath,
More desperate grew the strife of death.
The English shafts in vallies hail'd,
In headlong charge their horse assail'd;
Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep,
To break the Scottish circle deep.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE sun was sinking in the west, when a Stranger seated himself on the summit of one of the Cheviot hills, and looked anxiously on the land below. The apple was red and ripening on the tree, the nuts were brown in their husks, the rowans' bitter bunch hung glossy amidst the green bough; the wild plums grew in black and powdery clusters; the sweet green junipers were in full flavour; the nest of the wild bee was filled with

honey; and hill, wood, and dale, showed that summer had fulfilled all the purposes for which nature had given it light and warmth. He saw, too, the sickle in the hands of the reapers moving beneath the ears of yellow corn, the husbandman rubbing the heads in his hand, and looking if the grain was round and ripe; and he heard a song which gave an image of the season, from the lips of two maidens, who bore out food to the harvest field. The green hills presented a similar picture of pastoral abundance. The sunward sides were white over with flocks, shepherds walked among them, thinking on the romantic rivulet bank where the folds stood, and where they could see the maidens at bugling time; from the cheese presses was taken the well-formed and well-pressed curd, and the master of the household weighed the fleece which his flock had yielded, and calculated the growing wealth of his possessions. Away on the Stranger's left rolled the wide and restless sea, with all its winding outline of coast; and on his right many a feudal castle displayed its banner, while the arms of the warders gleamed bright in the descending sun.

The Stranger gazed awhile on the varied scene, and said, "Alas! green isle, had a brazen wall be-girt thee, it would not have shut out slaughter. The south oppresses the north, and the north re-

sists in bitterness and blood. Never will my native isle have happiness, till one trumpet warns its people to war, till they sing to the sound of the same pipe, till they bow to the breath of the same law, till they eat at the same table, and drink of the same cup. Then shall her united strength make the nations be just, then shall her ships cover the ocean, and she shall be empress of the deep.” He uttered this in the calm and confident tone of one who gives judgment rather than expresses a wish, or hazards an opinion. He still continued to look at the scene before him.

Upon this quiet and happy land, war, even as he looked, was let loose. The hills above and the dales below were suddenly filled with armed men. The ridges of the uplands were bristled with spears, and gleamed bright with swords; and so close and compactly were they placed, that the feather which dropt from the wood pigeon’s wing, as it flew, startled away, could fall nowhere but on a warhorse, a basnet, or a shield. The army which occupied the vale below seemed conducted with great prudence, and led by one wise and skilful in the art of war. Their pointed spears gleamed as they moved onward, their swords, drawn from the sheaths, shone sharp and broad, their quivers of arrows rattled as they came, and their burnished helmets and polished mail, touched by the hori-

zontal light of the sun, made the vale glow like a sea of agitated fire. The armies seemed well matched in numbers, enthusiasm, and discipline. Though they were in truth one people, and though a small stream divided their lands, their hostility was fierce, and they spared neither their noblest nor their bravest, when the trumpet was blown, and the national banner displayed. They were now about to increase the stream with blood, which ran clear and dimpling in the sun between them.

The Stranger, who witnessed the marching of the two armies, seemed a man of middle age, well knit, and formed for feats of activity and strength. His hair, long and black, descended in masses upon his shoulders, and his look was so calm, his face so pale, and he sat so still and motionless, that he seemed a statue rather than a man. He wore a close dress of gray woollen cloth; a mantle of the same colour was fastened with a silver clasp over his bosom, and a bonnet with a feather from the wing of the heron lay on the grass at his side. At a narrow belt hung a small ivory horn, and a short spear with a head of polished steel, and a shaft of root-grown ash was in his right hand.

A trumpet blew in the vale, it was answered from the hill, and the armies rushed together just as the sun was touching with its edge the summits

of the hills. From the low grounds there flew a close and incessant shower of arrows, so sharp and so strongly drawn, that no armour could resist their descent, while a slow and inconstant discharge from cannon and culverin showed that the art of destruction by gunpowder was yet in its infancy. Against this missile war, swords were drawn and spears were levelled, and the strife for awhile was fierce and desperate. To one acquainted with the warlike nature of the nations of the earth, and their modes of attack and resistance, this contest presented an image of England and Scotland deeply emblazoned with the characters of the two countries. There came Scotland, impatient and ireful, from the declivity of the hill, her thistled banner spread to the wind, her tartans rustling with her rapid steps, her long sharp lance in her hand, and a mingled prayer to God and Saint Andrew on her lips: and there stood England on the vale below, her yew bow in her left hand, with which she thrice conquered France and all her chivalry, the feathered shaft drawn close to her right ear, and her practised and patient eye measuring the distance, and marking the deadly place where her arrow should enter.

The eye of the Stranger knew every pennon that was spread, and the name of every knight who urged his steed to the contest. "Yonder," he said,

“glitters the royal banner of Scotland, and beneath it fights James Stuart, with half the noble youths of his realm. The Douglas, the Lindsay, the Herries, the Home, and the Gordon ; I see them, and I know them all. And there moves the banner of England, with the valour and the wisdom of the Howards, the fire of the Stanleys, and the daring of the Bulmers and the Beaumonts to guide and guard it. Alas for Scotland ! when England shoots her cloth-yard shafts, and charges with all her chivalry.”

As he uttered this the two banners approached each other, and many a gallant man was stricken to the earth ; many a warrior was unhorsed ; there was many a prisoner taken, and many a rescue made. On one part the arrows descended in a close and glittering shower, and on the other the barbed warhorses and their armed riders poured to the attack like a torrent of gleaming steel. The stranger rose, shaded the sun from his eyes with his hand, and looked intently on the contest. The English pressed eagerly forward ; their best and bravest warriors were there, and the hope of taking the King, and conquering the royal standard, animated and urged them to the attack. This, however, seemed no easy task. Against the lines of Scottish spears the southern chivalry spurred their horses, and struck with their bills in vain ; through

many a gallant bosom the lance was stricken, and many a saddled and bridled horse ran masterless over the hills.

But from the ranks of Scotland the English arrows singled out noble after noble, and leader after leader, and scarce a man of note was left to guard the royal banner, save a single knight whose enthusiasm and bravery inspired all around him. He was sheathed completely in mail, his helmet was without a plume, his visor down, and without a cognizance. But the extraordinary courage and skill with which he fought, and the deeds which he did, drew many a gallant soldier to his side, and actions were performed by common hands which were worthy of heroes. The fortune of the day was too well decided to be thus retrieved. The royal banner was beaten to the ground, and soiled with mire and blood; and the knight who defended it was borne to the earth sore wounded with an arrow, and many a good soldier beside him.

The sun had been for some time set, the stars were bright, the harvest moon was nigh the full, and had just shewed her light above the Cheviot hills, when a thick darkness fell at once from the sky, and a man could not see his hand as he held it before him to grope out his way. The English retired from the attack, and left the Scottish stand-

ard on the ground, and the knight swooned in his blood beside it.

The Stranger hastened down Cheviot side, passed the English archers as they stood in their ranks with their right hands dropt from the half-drawn strings, and went fearless and unchallenged through the cavalry of Cheshire, as the riders returned, cursing the thick darkness which prevented them from seizing the standard and taking the King.

“ It is ever the way of these wily Scots,” said a veteran from Chester; “ they begin to fight about sunset, that they may run away under the cloud of night when they are sure of being beaten.”

“ Aye,” responded a soldier from York, “ and they have friends too, man, such as the bowmen of Cheshire, or the billman of the East Riding cannot find when the bugle blows for battle. Did ye ever behold such thick darkness; ye may grope it, man, ye may cut it with your sword. This is none of nature’s deeds, but a magical covering thrown over these crouching Scots by their great magician to secure their retreat. I’ll wager my steel-pommelled saddle against a Scotchman’s straw sonkes, that this infernal cloud would turn a flight of cloth-yard shafts, as effectually as steel mail.” “ Strike him, strike him with your lance,” shouted a soldier, “ strike that skulking Scot, on

your right hand, else he will steal your gray steed from under you." "Strike whom," replied the soldier, looking eagerly round; "I see only thy foolish self." "Then may the saints soon send me out of this enchanted ground," answered the man of York; "I saw a man with matted hair, bare-headed and bare-footed, pass between us, even now. There be wizards or fiends on Flodden-edge."

The Stranger, to whom this speech referred, passed to the ground where the concluding contest had been. He lifted the royal banner and unfurled it to the wind again. He looked on the knight as he lay in his blood, whose prowess for awhile had made the victory doubtful. He stooped silently over him, withdrew the well used sword from his right hand, unbuckled his rich and polished mail, and undid the clasps of his visor. The knight lay motionless; the blood flowed freely from his wounds, and stained anew the grass where he was extended. He took him gently in his arms, prayed over him for a little space, poured a clear liquid from a small phial upon his head, and said, "Arise Sir James, time was, time is, and may soon be no more; arise, thou hast proved thy fortune." When he had done speaking Sir James rose from the ground as freshly and firmly as though he had

never been wounded. He looked on the dead and dying, and said, “Here warred I to-day amongst the chivalry of Scotland, and warred unhappily. Am I alone left living of all that royal host—where is Home, Gordon, Maxwell, and Douglas?”

“Fled—captive—slain,” was the concise answer of the Stranger, who stood with his arms folded over his bosom, and regarded the living knight and the groups of slaughtered gentlemen and nobles as a husbandman would regard a field of new mown hay. “The Douglas never flies,” replied Sir James; “and the Maxwell never yields; the Gordon is ever victorious; and who ever saw the sword of Home backward in Scotland’s battles?” “Sir James,” said the Stranger, “most truly have you characterised them. The Douglas never flies, and the Maxwell never yields—there their bodies lie as they were pierced in defence of their King and the honour of their country. For the Gordon and the Home would you know where they are?” “Most gladly,” answered Sir James, “it must have been a field which valour could not retrieve when those gallant soldiers fled.” “Even so,” replied the Stranger.

The thick darkness which till now had covered hill and dale rolled suddenly away in the direction of Scotland, and Sir James looked and saw the unbroken bands of Gordon and Home retir-

ing beneath the light of the moon which beamed out on their path without an interposing cloud. “Alas!” said the knight, “and of all the army are these the sole survivors! Ah Flodden-field, sorrowful will thy name be amongst the maidens of the low country—and in many a tale and song will they be honoured who fell here beneath the shafts and swords of the enemies of Scotland.” “You mourn not for the King of your country, Sir Knight,” said the other; “know ye not that James Stuart lies trodden as stiff as that bloody turf beneath the hoofs of Howard’s horsemen?” I mourn not for him, peasant,” answered Sir James; “the meanest hind that bled for him was worthier than he. To his base love and his senseless chivalry the blood of his people has been poured idly out; for had he led his soldiers like a man, and not like a knight-errant, the blood which swells the stream at Twisel-bridge would have been that of the Howards and their English churls.”

“The blood of the English, Sir Knight,” replied the Stranger, “was periled freely, and as freely was it spilt by the lances of the Yarrow, the Annan, and the Nith. But in Scotland will James Stuart the Fourth never reign more, and were he to be raised from this bloody field, and the breath of heaven poured into his nostrils, how could his proud vain nature meet the looks of his insulted

nobles; and how could his tender heart endure to hear mothers weeping, and widows lamenting, and maidens wailing, and asking him for their sons, their husbands, and their lovers?" "You have expressed the monarch's character honestly and truly," said the knight. "You have said that the blood of England was poured freely out. I see none of her sons either living or dead."

The Stranger turned his face to the south, where the thick cloud of night seemed reaching from heaven to earth, as black as a raven's wing, and as dense as a wall. "Hearest thou nothing, Sir James?" he enquired. The sound of mirth and revelry rose suddenly on all sides. The cloud passed slowly away, the moon sent down her stream of pure and uninterrupted light, and the southward valley was visible for several miles. The knight looked, and there he saw the Chester chivalry heaped horse and man, where they rushed upon the Scottish spears; their billmen lay like mown grass, and their bowmen rank succeeding rank, where the swords of Gordon and Home had stopt the flight of their shafts for ever. "Well and worthily they bore them," said the knight; "see how soldier-like they lie each with his fatal yew-tree in his hand, and a shaft half plucked from the quiver." "Look a little farther," said the Stranger.

Sir James looked, and his colour changed, for

he beheld the men of England—their ranks unbroken—their banners floating proudly on the night wind, and their pavilions pitched without either watch or ward. “They are the conquerors,” he said, bitterly, “and therefore may dispense with the precautions of men when an enemy is nigh. Oh for one hour of that gallant army on which I looked so proudly at mid-day! they would lend the vale another sound than that of wassail mirth and victors’-shouts.” “Cry your war-cry, and see if it will raise them from their bloody beds,” said the Stranger; “now of a truth may men know you are a Scotchman—thou art wise too late.” As he spoke, the shouts of the English increased more and more.

“Here’s to thee, Will Howard,” exclaimed a rough, bold voice. “Thou art a puller down of kings.” The shout was long in subsiding which followed this toast. “And here’s to George Beaumont,” said a Tynedale knight, springing to his feet, “a truer hand ne’er drew a bow, and stouter heart ne’er shot a shaft.” The loud welcome with which the toast was received, shewed the love of the soldiers for that gallant name. “And shall we forget Ned Stanley and his Cheshire horse?” shouted a third knight. “The billmen of Howard can give a good stroke, and the archers of Beaumont can shoot a sharp shaft; but when the swords

of Ned Stanley came to the northern bosoms, they fell or fled, and left their noblest behind them.” Many a steel helmet was waved in the air, and many a gory sword in honour of the noble name.

“ How like you the sight, Sir James,” thus questioned the Stranger, “ and how like you the sound?” The knight snatched his sword from the ground, and exclaimed: “ I have heard and seen enough. Peasant stand from my path; for the war-cry of Stanley you shall hear a wail when I enter yon proud tent. My country will never see me more, nor know that I did a knightly deed, and died as a brave man should.” The other laid his hand on his arm, and said, mildly, “ Death cannot now be found, and thou art not yet worthy to die. A well-fought field for thy country’s sake, and the shout of victory in thy ear cannot be thine. Follow me.” “ And who art thou,” demanded Sir James, “ that I am thus commanded to do as thou wilt. I follow no churl—who art thou, and what is thy name?” “ I am as thou seest, James,” was the answer; “ let thine eyes judge whether I am a man or no. My name among men is Michael—a worthy king added the title of Sir, but I insist not on it, as it has been bestowed often since on the vain and the vile.”

“ Sir Michael,” said Sir James, “ I charge thee by thy knighthood to tell me, am I a prisoner. I

fought till I fell through loss of blood, and since then till now I am ignorant of what has happened." "Thou art free from all bonds save those of sin and folly," replied Sir Michael. "In fight I saw thee acquit thyself worthily, and to no man didst thou yield one foot of ground." "Then," answered Sir James, "My purpose is fixed. I shall go down to these victors, and do one deed of valianthood, and die."

And he went forward, where many a fair face lay cold in the moonlight—the sword, the axe, the lance, the bill, and the arrow had heaped the field; and Sir James, who loved a brave man in life, and reverenced him in death, walked slowly along, nor touched a corse with his feet of either friend or enemy. There lay two bodies face to face, their swords had inflicted mutual wounds, and death had stamped on their looks the fury which in life inspired them. He glanced at them, and passed on. An ancient warrior sat against a stone, his head had dropped on his bosom, and his bloody sword was still in his hand. His face was rough with the scars of other battles, and though transfixed with a lance, his look was calm and determined. At his feet lay the body of a youth whom he had slain, his golden tresses came curling out from below his helmet, a broken sword lay beside him, and in his bosom was a lock of fair hair, which at sun-rise

had shone on the neck of his love. Sir James sighed, and passed onward. He came to the place where the barbed war-horses of England had charged the men of Teviot and Yarrow. There lay six hundred young warriors as they dropped in their ranks, and beside them the chivalry of Chester and Durham scattered as thick as forest leaves in November.

“ Ah, my gallant lads of the forest,” said Sir James, “ had a wise head led your valour, the maidens of Yarrow would have welcomed you back with garlands and songs. There you lie—truer hearts never drew swords, and long shall the border bewail the fall of the Flowers of the Forest, and sing how the southern swords have wede them away.” He reached now the skirts of the battle field. A wounded soldier had retired from the bloody press to the side of a brooklet, and stooped down to slake his thirst in the stream. But there life failed him—he had dropped forward; his lips seemed touching the water, and his blood was still mingling with the current. To a far different scene Sir James now directed his looks. Before him was the hasty encampment of the victors, where joy and sorrow were strangely mingled.

An hundred fires were kindled on the ground, and round each fire sat a group of soldiers, driving on the song and the wine cup, recounting their

actions, and praising their own prowess. “Look at this little crooked piece of wood,” said a Tyne-dale archer, holding up his bow, “thirty-six cloth-yard shafts sang from this loom to day, and Scotland lost three dozen of her children. Ah, the brown yew-tree and the steel-headed shaft for ever.” “A good head-piece and mail-coat regard your arrows no more than the stings of as many wasps,” said a billman of Durham; “such a plaything as that may do for quelling the wild Scottish men of the mountains, who have not the sense to wear steel garments. But what would your bird-bolts have done with a head-piece of steel full fifteen pounds weight, which this little weapon of mine clove to-day on the head of its owner?” “And what is either arrow or bill,” cried a third, “to be compared to a good sharp lance and a well-bitted horse? Ah, with this little active bit of Ripon steel I have pierced many a shield, and bored many a corslet.” And the soldier shook a long gory lance in the moonlight. “And what is shaft, spear, or bill, compared to a good brown sword, forged in a charcoal fire, and tempered in a wolf’s blood,” exclaimed a warrior from Westmoreland: “an arrow is a cowardly thing; a bill is only for the strong and the stupid; a lance is good, but the horse wins half the honour from the rider. Command me to a short sharp sword; it is the thing

for a man of soul and science, it is a gentleman's weapon, and only three men in the island know how to handle it. One is Will Howard of Raby; one is James Stuart of Scotland, and the other, I shall let my friends and my enemies name him, but gaze on that, and guess." And he flourished his sword proudly in the air.

Apart from these warriors was seated a motley company of soldiers and sutlers, drivers of waggons, monks, and women. The wine cup and ale flagon circulated with great celerity, and they talked, sung, prayed, swore, and shouted, forming a kind of compound din, which expressed confusion of body and mind, better than any image which invention could supply. "Let the wine cup go round," said a soldier, who balanced himself with difficulty, "it is all the reward a poor fellow gets for knocking the enemies of old England on the head—let it go round, Sir Monk; stay not the generous liquid with one of your idle prayers." "I was but breathing out the blessing of Saint Wilfred over the good wine," said the monk "in order that it might do its good duty, with a sinful layman, who slays men's bodies and repents not." "A plague on thee, priest," said a soldier, who took his lip from the cup that he might give better vent to his anger, "a plague on thee, priest. Dost thou talk of God to a soldier, whose whole occupation

is in cutting throats? Place me an armed Scottishman before your abbey door, and try whether your prayer or my pike will conjure him away soonest."

"Let the good monk speak, I pray thee, Simon," said one of the dames of the camp, "he is a charitable and benevolent man; he feeds the poor at the abbey gate, and cheers the hearts of the soldiers' wives when their husbands are warring on the borders. He is a good man, and loves to see a fair face, and a full cup, and mirth in merry old England." "A fair character, monk," said another of the group; "hast thou had good luck to day in confessing and forgiving opulent sinners? Ah! many a fair piece of gold has the eve of battle cost me; an acquittance for mortal sin is an expensive item to a scrupulous conscience." The monk was one of those joyous personages who could chaunt profane songs, sing devout hymns, tell a wild tale, pray a long prayer, and bandy about the jest and the blow; and this made his company much more welcome than that of a wiser man.

"Priest," said a soldier, striking the cup from his lip with the staff of his lance, "lay aside that comrade of thine, he will run away with thy wit and thy mirth, and make thee dull and devout. Wilt thou tell me, for I know thou hast warred with the devil in thy day, what hand he has in the

thick darkness which came over the battle, and now falls over the camp. I am but a lame guesser, Sir Priest, but I think old Michael Scott himself has taken Scotland's part to day." "The monk shook his head, looked as grave, and sat as steady as he could, and said, "the devil I defy, and Michael Scott I despise, for I carry that about me which confounds alike fiend and wizard. Behold a paring of the hind hoof of the prophet Balaam's ass, after its mouth was opened; from this incomparable relic all that is not of God flies as darkness flies before the light of morning." And he unrolled it with much care, and a great show of respect, and held it up in the gleam of the bickering fire. "Sir Priest, it wont pass muster; this relic of thine," said a soldier, "is apocryphal; thou livest too near Gaffer Weldon's forge to go far for the paring of a horse's hoof. No ass had ever so large a foot as this has formed a part of." The monk took the relic, looked at it gravely, and said, "O sinful man, seven score stripes shall my bare body endure to night for this. Soldier, thou sayest well, it is the paring of a horse's hoof. St. George, forgive me for mistaking a relic from the forefoot of thy blessed steed on which thou slewest the dragon, for that of a meaner creature!" The merry faces of the soldiers persuaded the priest that he was before an audience slow to believe in such mysterious

things; and, fertile in expedients, he thus sought to cover the retreat of his relic, and it is but justice to his invention to say, that he succeeded.

“ What I have to say,” said the monk, “ will drive the mirth from all faces. Once on a time, some three hundred years ago, when Michael Scott the wizard was a holy monk as I am, he had a journey to go, and he took his scrip and his staff, a cruse of water, and some dried peas, the only food which our order eats, but it is eaten thankfully, and we wax as lusty as though we dined on the fatness of the land, and drank the richest of the vintage. The devil came to Michael by the way, and tempted him, and taunted him, and there was a sore strife between them. But Michael vanquished the enemy, and drove him away, and went on his journey. Now it chanced that Michael waxed weary, and when his feet became sore, he looked, and there stood a beautiful black palfrey ready saddled on the road before him. Now as it pleaseth the saints often to work wonders in aid of their faithful servants, the palfrey seemed to that holy man as a steed sent to comfort him, and he leapt on its back, and pursued his journey. But Michael soon felt and knew that he rode upon the fiend, and by a power which the pious only possess, he disarmed his infernal steed of all strength to do him harm. When he reached his journey’s end,

he led him into Fountain's abbey forge, and had four heavy iron shoes clinked upon his feet ; the devil was lame for a year and a day ; the smith that shod him went raving mad, and bequeathed this paring of his hoof to the abbey as a token that holiness had conquered the fiend." And he held up the relic, and then replaced it in his scrip.

"Bravo, priest, thou shalt have another cup for that, God ! and thou art a good one !" exclaimed several soldiers, half choking with laughter, and the cup and the flagon moved rapidly round.

Sir James and his companion saw another group seated beneath some elm-trees. They were a few of the more active and prudent spirits of the army, whose love of blood was tempered by love of gain, and whose valour never got the better of their presence of mind. They could calculate the value of the gold upon a helmet before they struck it with the sword, and see in imagination the riches of a city, in the moment they were storming the walls. By the light of the moon they arranged and apportioned their spoils. All around them lay rich mantles, costly helmets, fine coats of mail, swords with jewelled hilts, and cups of silver and gold ; nor had those spoils been obtained without resistance ; they were wet with blood, and had been recently torn from the baggage and the bodies of the slain. "See !" said Sir Michael, "there they

sit sordidly dividing the bloody relics of battle,—the hawk and the crow will gorge them and be gone, but these human vultures blood alone cannot appease."

"Those Scots," said a soldier, who was dividing the booty, "those Scots, to be a poor people, seem to have a very pretty notion of their own in going to war ; they carry all their riches about them, and when they fall beneath the arrow or the sword, a handy fellow finds some good gleanings. Here are some passable trinkets. This sword with the diamonds in its golden handle ; this garment embroidered with thistles of gold, and this little drinking cup and dagger, have belonged to some leader of note and name. Let us offer them up at the shrine of our Ladye at York, so that we may prosper in our wars, and be blest with the sack of some rich city as a reward of our piety." "Nay, nay, Luke," said a fellow soldier, "we cannot afford so rich a bribe to old mother Merciful at York ; she will take the gift and gape for more, and never heed the prayers of a poor soldier, let him pray ever so stoutly for a short skirmish and much booty. Why honest Gib Middylton was hanged at Durham, though he laid as much red gold on our Ladye's shrine, as would have purchased remission for stealing a relic of the real cross, or Beckett's bloody stone. Old mother Church has a greedy swallow, and we must

find a cheaper retailer of forgiveness,—a church that wont herry a man's house to give him hopes of heaven."

"Coome, coome, Rafe," said one of his comrades in a soothing tone, "a truce with thy jibes; no one cries so lustily as thyself for the aid of the saints when thou comest to perilous knocks, and truly the saints must be tender-hearted to save such a subject as thee, the last to give battle, and the foremost at the spoil! coome, coome, Rafe, be moderate, and let our Ladye have her share."

"I grudge not the share of our Ladye," answered Ralph, "if she would be considerate; but there is ne'er a saint in the calendar who would not give such handy servants his protection for a smaller offering. But let her have it; one word more, comrades, I shall make the offering myself!" "Thou make the offering!" exclaimed Luke, "when didst thou grow so honest as to be trusted with the goods of either saint or sinner? Well! I wot our Ladye will get little if we confide her share to thee. Nay, nay, there is a holy hermit hard by, who goes on a weekly pilgrimage to her shrine; we will let him be the bearer, and then we may look for blessings to follow."

"Bravo, Luke," cried Ralph; "this holy hermit of thine, is as stark a knave as lives between Scotland and Scarborough, and no one knows him bet-

ter than thyself, seeing he is thy born brother. If there is a house herried in the hundred, the hermit comes in for his share. But hilloa ! sword, robe, cup, and dagger, where are they ? conjured clearly away by the mass. Ralph, didst thou do it by magic or slight of hand ? ” “ By slight of hand,” exclaimed Ralph, giving his comrade a blow with his fist, that made him stagger ; “ but whither are the gifts for our Ladye gone ? I took them from the hands of a dying soldier, who told me they belonged to bold King James himself. I saw no one come—I saw no one go, and yet they are vanished like a devil’s gift; moved off as cleanly as if old Michael the magician had done it.” “ I saw something,” said a soldier, with a shudder, “ I saw a dark shadow between me and the moon. I have heard old hermit Selby say, that the arms of the King of Scotland were made in fairy-land, by Michael Scott, and that they never would be won in battle, let England fight ever so stoutly.”

The soldiers huddled closely together, overcome with terror, and he who remembered a prayer thought himself happy.

CHAPTER II.

It had much of glamour might,
Could make a lady seem a knight ;
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall,
Seem tapestry in lordly hall ;
A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
A sheeling seem a palace large.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

SIR Michael stood by the side of Sir James with the robe, the sword, the cup, and the dagger, of the King of Scotland in his hand. The knight looked anxiously upon them, then glanced his eye on the startled soldiers, and said to his companion in a low voice, “ Give back these baubles to those who took them. Why would ye rob the soldier of the spoil he has honourably won ? ” “ James,” answered the other, “ you speak as your gross sight informs you ; I act as the mind directs. He who bore these in battle last, bore them not unworthily, for he was a brave prince, but he obeyed the dark glances of fair dames ; he was a slave to sight which is sensual ; and a lady’s smile won more from his hand than the words of gray-headed

wisdom. This sword and dagger, robe and cup, are too pure to be polluted by vulgar hands. They were made for the great Robert Bruce, when he warred for Scotland's freedom; with this good blade he dyed the brook of Bannock, and wearing this robe he dispensed righteous judgment and prudent mercy among his people. Judge ye, therefore, if it be meet that such things should be profaned by common hands. Even out of this act shall I read you a lesson fit for a prince to hear. These spoils would have proved the ruin of these men. Over them, blades would have been bared, and life's blood spilt. I spared these men, to be a scourge to the rich priests and opulent nobles of this haughty land."

"I know these spoils right well," said Sir James, "and common legends say that the sword was forged in a fairy fire, and the robe wrought in a fairy loom. Such is the tale of our poetic peasantry. For me, any blade that can cut through a steel casque, or any robe that keeps a soldier from the night dew, is as good as aught forged in visionary fires, or woven in imaginary looms." Sir Michael smiled, and answered, "James, thou wert ever an unbeliever, and with the King didst scorn the spirit which came to warn him from the war; like him, too, thou didst slight the terrible voice which summoned all the nobles afterwards slain at

Flodden-edge, to answer at the judgment-seat. Thou wilt change thy creed before the green hills of Scotland feel thy feet again. Thou art doomed to a severe pilgrimage."

"It will be a strange journey," replied the knight, "which can make me believe that this old war-worn robe is of supernatural weft, and this little sharp broad blade is not a piece of good Damascus steel. But I am glad I have the good sword once more in my hand. I wish to die as a soldier should. Here is the tent of Surrey, and thus I confront the nobles of England who mocked and scorned in song and jest the romantic valour of James Stuart." With his robe thrown over his left arm, and his sword held before him, he was about to rush into the tent, when a grasp from which there was no escape suddenly fixed him to the place.

"James," said Michael, sternly, "know that thou hast no longer thy own wild will on earth. I am commissioned to save thy body from the sword, and thy soul from perdition; and thou must take counsel of me, and do even as I bid thee. If I leave thee, a bloody corse or in ignominious captivity wilt thou be, ere three strokes are stricken with thy sword. Enter not the tent." Sir James stept back and exclaimed, "By what token am I to credit this wild tale of thine? Show me some-

thing by which I may judge if thou deceivest me or no ; thou hast been much my friend hitherto.” “ Look around thee, James,” said the other “ and tell me what thou seest.” “ See,” said the knight, gazing hastily around, “ I see the dead lying under the moon on Flodden-edge. Accursed am I for not dying where the Douglas and the Lindsay died. And I see the unfurled flags and glittering tents of the victors before me. I can hear their ribald songs, and their haughty vaunts. What else have I to see ? ”

“ Thy sight is true,” said Sir Michael ; “ such is the scene which to thee this fair vale presents. But what doth the English see ? Their gross sight cannot behold what they would give a rich lordship to perceive. They see the dead on Flodden-side ; they see the captives who sit guarded in their tents ; they see the rich spoils they have taken ; but they see not the bold and gallant knight who guarded the royal standard of Scotland, and made such havoc among their golden spurs.” “ By St. Andrew, I believe thou tellest the truth,” said Sir James. “ Nay, I am as blind as these southerns are, not to have known this before. No sentinel has challenged me ; and here I stand by Surrey’s tent, free and skaithless. This art of thine I would willingly learn, Sir Michael ; to be invisible is worth a royal prerogative. To glide

into the courtier's privacy, when he is whispering secret treason ; to behold the physician spice the poison-cup ; the assassin prove the point of his midnight dagger ; to enter the forbidden chamber where the couch is soft and the fair one frail ; these were blessings worthy of a throne."

"A most unworthy use, James," exclaimed Michael, "thou wouldest make of that hidden art. But thou art not invisible ; thou art seen but not known. It is not in the lot of ought corporeal, of ought that has of this earth in it, to dissolve into air, and become as a shadow or breath of wind. Man must become dust before he becomes spiritual, for the flesh dissolves in the grave, and the spirit ascends into heaven, descends into hell, or wanders about the green earth, bewailing its departed joys, and enduring the sight of the sorrows of man as a punishment for its own sins. Thou art therefore still visible. It might mortify thy pride, and read thee a lesson of humility, couldst thou but know what thou seemest in the sight of men."

"Nay, Michael," said Sir James, "it would do more than that, it would teach me to believe in the spiritual empire of good and evil beings on earth, in which I have but a slender faith even now."

"Come then and believe," said Michael ; "see, there is a fountain as pure as one of the mirrors of

Holyrood. The moon just now is looking at her own face in its water; go and behold thyself, and see that thou scarest not the blessed planet which has hitherto ruled thy lot."

The knight ran to the little pool where it lay quiet, and, surrounded by its margin of bright green grass, he looked at his shadow, and started back with affright. He looked all round; he looked at himself; he ventured forward again, and the shape which he beheld gave him such mortal offence, that he plunged his sword into the water, even to the hilt. A wild scream arose from the pool; a strange agitation shook the water; he withdrew his sword, and it was with horror he beheld a drop of dark blood hanging at its point.

"Well and boldly done, thou faithful weapon," said Michael, looking on the sword blade. "I knew when I tempered thee in Arabia that nought evil could abide thy dint. And well and boldly done my servant James; thou art come of a house that never shook at aught; yet thou mightest have trembled at the sight thou sawest." "And I did tremble," said the knight; "I looked in, and the expanding door of hell could have shewn nought more terrible. I saw the faces of all those I had unrighteously slain. I started back with affright. I found courage to look again, and I saw something like the shadow of myself, but grim, hideous,

and horrible. The water-phantom glared on me; hell was in its eyes, and a smile on its skinny lips. I knew the form; it had appeared to me on that night I passed from Holyrood; it was the evil angel who has had power over me, and in the agony of my heart I plunged my sword in its bosom. Didst thou hear a low shriek? and is that blood on the blade?"

"James, thou speakest truly," answered Sir Michael, "and thou hast foiled the evil spirit which has ruled thy lot since the slaughter at Saughie-burn. Such pain as a reprobate spirit can feel, thou hast inflicted; and well and wisely hast thou used the good sword, which can pierce aught but the blessed shapes of heaven. Hang the blade by thy side, for it becomes thee to wear it. Sit down, and I shall tell thee the story of that good weapon. Sit down; thou art as safe within touch of the Howards' right hand, as if thou satest on Arthur's seat, with the summer morn shining on Holyrood."

Sir James seated himself beside a little springlet, which leapt from a crevice in the rock into a stone basin, and shone cold and pure in the light of the moon. "I have been a wanderer from my youth," said Michael, "and gained knowledge as wise men did of old, by travelling amongst the nations of the earth, and looking on the ways of men.

It happened in the wild desert, that as I sat and refreshed myself at a little well amidst a clump of palm and date trees, a beautiful wild steed approached the spring, and in an agony of thirst plunged his head into the fountain. He seemed a noble animal, as dark as a raven's back, without one white hair save a spot in his forehead, and when he ran in the desert, his mane and tail streamed like flame wavering in the wind. As he drank, I laid my hand on his mane, sprang upon his back,—he gave one loud snort, and away he started. I think I feel him beneath me now. The raven of the desert croaked, but pursued us not; the hyena uttered a low growl, and started from our path; and the hermit, whose cavern was between the wilderness and the field of rice, fell on his face, and prayed for my preservation. We came to a vast valley where a battle had been fought, the bones of twenty thousand men lay bleaching in the burning sun. The skulls crunched beneath the heels of my steed. I looked back, and imagined I beheld all the bones rise into skeletons, and glare after me. Two hungry lions had seized a horse and rider; their victims were bleeding beneath their paws, and they lashed their sides with their tails in token of enjoyment. They sprang from their prey as I came near, and ran howling into the wilderness. A wild Arab had waylaid

a Christian traveller, and had pulled him to the earth ; with his left hand he grasped his hair, and with his right he flourished his scymitar to give the mortal stroke ; he beheld the wild steed come ; his love of blood over-mastered fear, the horse sprung upon him, crushed him to the earth like a worm, and left him dying on the sands. We came to a forsaken city ; its walls were broken down, its majestic temples were mute, its marble tombs were empty, and a hyena stood and looked from a place where oracles had spoken of old. We came nigh to an inland sea ; there was wind but no wave, and the water raised no green grass on its margin, nor lilies along its border ; no waterfowl were swimming on its surface, neither were there a living thing to be seen. The wild steed gave a neigh of joy, and rushed towards this fearful sea. I prayed, for I thought death was at hand, and suddenly there fell something from a dark cloud which was sailing over us ; it gleamed like fire as it descended, and plunged into the sand between the horse's fore feet. In a moment I was thrown senseless on the sand, and the creature that bore me ran on, and I saw him no more. When I awoke, I saw something glittering beside me, a substance resembling melted steel, and it was hot and burning. I knew it to be what fell from heaven, and I blessed it, and took it up, and bore it with me through the

desert. I came to the forsaken city, and there sat an old man with a cross before him eating wild figs. I told him all that had befallen, and he fell on his face before me, and said, ‘Michael Scott, thou art a favoured one; the steed which bore thee was the unholy spirit, and the brand that fell from heaven was a token that thou art one of the elect. O for that blessed metal which came from above, and O for a fire of heaven’s own kindling, that I might make thee a sword which a demon could not resist.’ And I said, ‘Father, here it is;’ and the old man’s face kindled with joy, and he took the rough metal and threw over it a nitrous preparation, and the fire sparkled up, and all the ancient temple of Apollyon was filled with a wonderous light. When he had fashioned the sword, he carried it burning to the entrance of the temple, and waved it to and fro, till it seemed to kindle all the air. Then he ground the blade, and wrought many holy symbols and devices on the sides, and he added a hilt of pure gold, and set it round with precious stones. And when he had finished it he put it into my hand, and said, ‘Go, thou favoured one; this blade, wrought in the fire kindled in heaven, tempered in the pure air of God, with its hilt forged of consecrated gold, and covered with the precious stones which adorned the altar of Jerusa-

lem, will be irresistible in a righteous man's hand, and neither mortal nor demon will endure its dint. I took the sword; it is now at thy side! I have struck the foes of Scotland with it; I have since ridden on that wild steed's back, and I hope to ride again."

Sir James laid the sword across his knees, looked on it, and said, "of all wild tales thou hast told me the wildest. Why, this sword was given to Robert the Bruce; it has been watched as a sacred thing by his descendants, and I could know the blade among ten thousand. But if I can believe in the sword, how shall I believe in thee? The good Robert has been with the just these hundred and eighty years, and thou seemest a man in thy prime, nay, art fresh, and lusty, and young; a fellow fit to do battle for a crown; a candidate for a lady's chamber; such a marvel cannot be."

"From this vale of death, where the nobles of Scotland lie slaughtered, thou shalt never go," answered Michael, "till thou givest credence to me. Dost thou believe that heaven's hollowness above thee, that earth's footstool under thy feet, and the deep dark sea that roars upon the wild coast, are not the works of one far mightier than man? Will the moon cease shining, the stream cease rushing, and the grass cease growing, if thou commandest them? Believest thou that fires are below, and blessedness

above, and that a fiend tempts man, that he may gain his soul? or that God takes delight in the happiness of his creatures? If thou believest in these things, then mayst thou credit much more; thou mayest believe that God, for wise and holy purposes, prolongs man's life on earth; that he interposes, marvellously to save and redeem nations and families, and that he admonishes and warns man a thousand thousand times, with signs in the sky, with visions on earth, and by dreams when sleep comes on. It pleases Him on high to cut off the oppressor and the troubler in his early career, so it is also his pleasure to prolong the life of those he loves, for the purposes of holiness and virtue."

"I see, I understand," replied the knight, "the object of your argument; but occurrences against the course of nature startle and alarm me, and though my sceptic creed has been somewhat rudely shaken of late, I must acknowledge that I cannot wholly believe nor altogether deny the miraculous matters of which you have spoken, and of some of which I have been witness." "Be it so," answered the other; "your unbelief is easily cured,—how happens it that you stand unmolested at the entrance of your enemy's tent; yet no one strikes you dead, nor lifts a weapon against you?" Sir James stood and looked! all around him lay the English

army, and beside him Lord Surrey called his chiefs to council ; he could distinguish each leader, and know what he said.

“ Stanley ! ” said Howard, “ your sword struck deeply into the Scottish centre, and you were close to the royal standard ; is it true that the King is slain ? ” “ Noble Surrey ! ” answered Stanley, “ I saw the King surrounded by the prime of his nobility, contending with lance and sword against our chivalry ; many an arrow leapt from his Milan mail coat, and many a lance was stricken against him, yet he fell not, he fled not, and whoso he struck once, molested him no more. It was in truth a noble sight, to behold a warrior so excellent. So fought he when the sun went down ; amid the darkness which followed I could see him no longer.”

“ And it was with no good will of mine,” said Lord Dacre, “ that he fought so long, and that his fate is uncertain. Against him my followers drew the shaft, levelled the lance, and struck with bill and sword, and the brave circle which hemmed him in diminished during my attack ; escape he cannot ; I beheld him faint and wounded to the death ; and had not darkness descended between us, he would now have stood captive within call, even as that strolling minstrel stands at the door of your tent.”

“A minstrel!” said Lord Surrey; “shame to the knight who sits, while a follower of the art divine stands at my tent door. Fitz-Allan and Bulmer, invite him into our tent; let a seat be set at my right hand; place wine and food beside it; for one of the inspired sons of song honours us with his presence. The knights went, and soon returned, ushering in Sir James, accompanied by Sir Michael.

“Sir Minstrel,” said Lord Surrey, rising, and motioning Sir James to a seat, “the Howard welcomes you to his side; and never could poet come in a happier hour; for a glorious victory has been won, and a gallant king slain. Here, Ralph Theakston, bring the minstrel my harp; a better instrument his hand never swept; we would gladly hear him sing a song in our honour; honest praise is no flattery.” “Noble Howard,” answered Sir James, “thy praise in this I may not sing; thy hands are dyed with the blood of my kinsmen; the shouts of victory which lately filled the air were from my country’s enemies, and the groans which I hear even now of the wounded, come from men who share in my love and my blood.”

“Thou, shuffling Scot, this shall not serve thee,” exclaimed Lord Dacre; “sing! else by the moon and all her stars I shall dash out two of thy front teeth with my truncheon: sing! else I shall cut the

fingers from thy right hand, and mar thy minstrelsy for ever. Did not thy traitor King Bruce cause the Carmelite bard of Edward to sing of his fight at the brook of Bannock. Sing ! else I shall strip thy minstrel mantle from thy back, and scourge thee over the border."

"Lord Dacre ! this language is somewhat too rough," thus interposed Lord Surrey ; "the spirit of the poet should be soothed by kind words, and kindled by commendations. Thinkest thou that a minstrel can be urged into inspiration, as thou urgest on thy fiery warriors ? His sensitive spirit must, like a tender wound, be touched softly. Under your darkening brow and threatening eye a poet would have a hero's soul, and a hero's hand, if he sung one verse that deserved to live. Can the lark sing under the wing of the raven ? "

Sir James spoke in a tone modest but unembarrassed : "The duty of a minstrel, my Lord Surrey, is to sing a strain pleasant to the listener's ear, and what other song could the poet sing, who spoke truth of the noble Howard. But were I to sing how Lord Dacre escaped, and hardly escaped, from the war-axe of the Douglas ; or how he shunned the encounter of the King of Scotland's lance, who would protect me from his wrath ? and yet his wrath should not stay my song, did I not feel that the funeral wail becomes me more than a chaunt

such as would please the victor." "By the soul of my ancestors," replied Lord Dacre, "thou art a bold bard, and I'll warrant me thy hand is as dextrous with the lance as with the harp. I beg to be counted thy friend; thou hast a fair advantage over me; to be stricken both with sword and song, is not the wish of Thomas Dacre, so sing or be silent, as thou wilt." "Spoken like thyself, my iron veteran," said Lord Surrey; "in the Howards' tent the poet is as free as if that seat where he sits were one of his pastoral hills, and the banner above it the eagle of his native rock!"

Sir James sat and mused for a minute's space, and then, with a manly voice, sung a song which was long remembered about the pastoral vallies of the border. Lord Howard leaned over his sword, and the knights crowded round the tent to listen to the strain.

THE SONG OF SIR JAMES.

I.

The grass of Flodden's ruby red,
That late so greenly grew;
The sweet lark's foot is wet with blood
Instead of silver dew.
For Howard's arrow-flight has flown,
And in their fleet career
His steeds have trod o'er Scotland's strength,
And broke her deadly spear.

II.

I sing, and while I sing I sigh !
 For had these gallant men,
 Whose life's-blood stains the river red,
 Whose bodies choke the glen,
 Been sagely ruled, as bravely led,
 Yon moon above us hung,
 Another sight had seen, and I
 A happier song had sung.

III.

The sword has smote, the shaft is flown,
 The victor's cry is cry'd ;
 More sad is he who basely lives,
 Than he who bravely died.
 I'd rather lie like Lindsay sped,
 Have Douglas' bloody brow ;
 Or share stout Maxwell's grassy bed,
 Than be as I am now.

IV.

I fought where Surrey's shafts flew thick,
 Where rose fierce Selby's cry ;
 Where Dacre rush'd, and Stanley charg'd,
 And yet I could not die.
 Farewell to Scotland's pleasant land,
 And to its lovely dames !
 To lordly lance, and knightly brand,
 So sings he, sad Sir James.

Lord Surrey held out his hand; “There minstrel ! there is the right hand of a Howard, and it is as

proud of the poet's clasp as of the touch of a monarch. Thou hast sung wisely and well, and though an enemy, and English blood on thy hands, ask what boon thou wilt, and it is thine. May his reptile memory be embalmed in scornful verse, like a spider in amber, who honours not the un-teachable and untaught art."

"Thanks, noble Howard," answered Sir James, "but I have no boon to beg. I came to thy tent door to dare thee to mortal strife; I have seen thee, I have heard thee, and I fear thy nobleness of nature more than I fear thy sword."

"By Saint Edward!" said Lord Surrey, "thou art a bold bard. I can touch a harp, fashion a verse, and with a sword do my devoir as a knight. Minstrel! it might do thee some harm to strike three strokes of a sword with me underneath the moon; so I do not advise thee. I honour thy skill in the art of heaven too much to lead thee into the mystery of an art which men scruple not to say comes from another place." "It is unlike the Howard," answered Sir James, "to bring down the noble profession of arms to the level of an art practised by strolling mendicants. Let the minstrel sing his hireling song, and get his food and his dress, of which he is unworthy; but never compare the chaunt of a metre-ballad maker to the sound of the trumpet, the rushing to battle, and the splintering of

the spears, in the presence of lords and beauteous dames."

"By my faith ! and this wandering poet says well," said Lord Stanley, "and I shall never hear a song sung but I shall think of its unworthiness. It is an idle trade, a fashion which has sprung up lately at court. In the palace of his defunct Majesty of Scotland were harpers rude, and poets plenty; and the chivalrous monarch himself could touch the harp, and labour out a verse. Nay, even the son of grim old Douglas has thrown helmet and spear aside, and his verses have come further south than ever came his ancestor's sword. But what have we here ? Ned Clifford and my woodsman, John of Bredislee, bearing a slaughtered body ?" Lord Dacre exclaimed, "By heaven ! the King of Scotland !" All rose, and a warrior's body bathed in blood and pierced with wounds was laid on the floor of the tent.

The warrior's form was worthy of a king, and was found in a place that well became a warrior. He was finely formed and firmly knit; with a nose slightly aquiline, a broad and noble brow shaded with close black curls, and arms long, round, and sinewy, one of which still held a shivered sword, and the other grasped a broken spear, which had pierced the steel mail, flowered in gold, that covered his bosom. His helmet was dinted with

blows from sword and bill, and the points of arrows had etched the glossy polish. He was found amid a crowd of knights and soldiers, where the banner of Scotland was displayed ; but his surcoat was gone, and the flag had been cut from the staff. He was the last that had fallen ; the ground around was slippery with blood, and covered with cloven helmets.

Lord Surrey looked long and anxiously upon the noble figure before him ; his colour changed ; his eye glistened ; he turned aside and said, “ Ah ! gallant King of Scotland, little wist I when the challenge to battle passed this morning between us, and thou saidst to my herald, that to no knight in Christendom wouldest thou sooner give a free field and choice of time, than to the Howard ! little did I think that ere the midnight moon shone, thou wouldest lie in my tent pierced through with wounds, and that noble and fiery spirit quenched for ever.” And, taking a velvet cloak sparkling with gold and gems, he laid it softly over the body, and said, “ let prayers be in our tent, and let my four knights, Gray, Benson, Bulmer, and Selby, sit up with the slaughtered prince.”

Sir James sat silent ; his brow was dark, and in his eye there sparkled a light which seemed to fluctuate between gravity and mirth ; but when he heard the words of Lord Howard, his face grew

flushed tears trembled under his long dark eyelashes, and he exclaimed, in a voice that made the boldest start, “Howard! Howard! such honours are misplaced. That is the body of a man of low degree; worthy indeed, for valour is worthiness, of being watched honourably, and interred with respect, but unworthy from his rank of such honours as thou art paying.”

“Friend minstrel,” said Lord Stanley, “thou art strangely bold, and were it not that the noble Howard esteems an art in which he himself excels, thou mightest feel my rebuke in another way than words. Outwardly, in form and face, that is James Stuart; what mark is wanting to prevent conviction?” “That mark is wanting, Lord Stanley,” said Sir James, “which was worn in memory of a more terrible field than that of Flodden. That fatal symbol of filial disobedience, of the rebellion of son against father, the penance chain of iron which James Stuart has worn next his body since the field of Sauchieburn, is on another body, dead or living.”

All stood anxiously round, as one of the knights unbraced the armour, and displayed the body. No chain was there, and Lord Surrey said, “let my cloak remain as a covering, for he was a worthy knight.” “Please you, my Lord Surrey,” said his confessor, “this may be the monarch’s body yet. I

know somewhat of penances, and how they are observed; and I know no gay and gallant knight who would freeze his bare body with a weight of cold iron, who could escape from it by an indulgence from good mother church." "Thank thee for that, priest," said Lord Dacre, "the indulgence of our mother church gives a seasonable relief to many an opulent transgressor; and when I believe in her powers of remission of sins, I shall compound, and go to Paradise too."

The body was then removed into another tent; four knights in complete armour watched at the head and feet, and seven large torches placed all around threw a gross and wavering gleam of light from side to side of the narrow vale. Sir James saw the body moved away, the knights following, and the torches kindled, and his face glowed with the bitterness of his feelings. He thought on the gallant army, and on the flower of the nobility of Scotland; there they lay as thick as sheaves in an autumn field: as leaves on a winters' morn; as grass before the blade of the mower, when he is weary at eve. Life, as he thus meditated, grew a bitter boon, and death seemed sweet and desirable, since it promised repose and oblivion. "Sir Michael," he whispered to his companion, "the life which I now cast away was unwillingly preserved on that bloody field. Stay me not with

thy sorcery or thy love, and I shall die as becomes me, and as I deserve.” As he spoke he stood in the middle of the tent, drew his sword half way from the sheath, and exclaimed: “Look on me, Howard, I am James of Scotland; behold my signet ring; and look at my sword: hast thou noble or knight who dares measure a weapon with me? My body thou shalt have, but not till life is gone.” And he drew his sword, struck with the hilt on his bosom, and the links of a chain gave a slight rattle.

The English nobles looked on him, and then broke out into wild laughter. “A poet, a poet,” cried Lord Stanley; “he has all the madness necessary for inspiration. Thou, James Stuart, the Poet King? a wandering mendicant—a peasant harper—not one in all our camp would measure swords with such a moon-struck enthusiast as thou.” “Here Rawstone, and Hewett,” said Lord Dacre, “cool this hot-headed harper in the Twisel. A king! aye, a monarch among mendicants!”

“Sir Minstrel,” said Lord Surrey, “thou art not mad; for no madman could have framed the song thou hast lately sung. Nor can I believe thee knavish, since the divine art is never coupled with an unworthy nature. Nor can I believe thee overcome with wine, for a sober spirit has hitherto conducted thee. Be silent therefore, or begone: or if thou needs must speak, let thy words be those of

my favourite art, even though thou shouldst sing in the homely language of thine own people."

"Lord Surrey," said Sir James, "behold these true tokens—the signet-ring, and the chain." He unbuckled his armour, bared his bosom, and Howard looked to where he motioned him; a slight flush of anger passed over his face as he said, "Sir Minstrel, this is not well: the chain of the King is of iron; thine is of solid gold. The chain of the monarch is heavy, and thine is as light as that which a maiden hangs round her neck when she becomes a bride. Go from me now; but, as thou seemest of a mirthful mood, come to Raby-tower, and, by the faith of verse and the joy of the harp-string, I shall let thee be as mad and merry as thou wilt; but there is time and place for all things."

Sir James knew not what to say: he glanced to his companion, and there sat Sir Michael, as silent and still as a statue. He looked at the nobles and knights, and saw mirth in every face. He snatched up a basnet of steel, and gazing at the form which its polish reflected back, he muttered an imprecation, dashed the basnet on the floor, and striking it with his sword as it rolled, clave the solid steel cleanly asunder, and the fragments flew to the opposite extremities of the tent. "By St. George, poet," said Lord Stanley, laying the cloven basnet together, "if thy harp-string had the sorcery of

thy sword, thou wouldest soon harp me out of a fair estate. Let me look on the blade—ah ! by Saint Edward, this is a royal sword. I saw it in fair Holyrood, honoured as a relic of that bold rebel King Robert. Minstrel, I must make free to keep this weapon, and arrest thy person.”

Sir James started back from the grasp of Lord Stanley, and presenting the point of his weapon, exclaimed : “ He who wishes to wear it, must win it.” The sword of Lord Stanley was bared in a moment, and they advanced on each other. Lord Surrey snatched a mantle from the arm of one of his knights, threw it over the points of the swords, and rushing between them, said, “ For shame, Lord Stanley, to draw a sword in my tent on a guest whom I love to honour for his skill in the art which wise men admire.” “ ’Tis James Stuart himself, by heaven,” exclaimed Lord Dacre, “ this quarrel has made him into a monarch ; or else he has the art of transmigration as well as of minstrelsy.” “ It is the King of Scotland, and no one else,” shouted a soldier, from the entrance of the tent ; “ slay him where he stands, for he slew my two brethren.” Swords were drawn in haste—a rush of knights filled the tent—the lights were extinguished, blows and thrusts were given, and blood spilt. The tumult subsided—the torches were rekindled, and the voice of Lord Surrey was

heard, saying, "Where is the King of Scotland?" "He has slain Lord Dacre outright," said a knight in a low voice—his men are bearing him to his tent. "Peace be with him; he was a bold and forward soldier," answered Lord Surrey; "but who has taken the King of Scots? He has stricken Lord Stanley through the body. He is now bleeding to death, his knights kneeling over him, and James Stuart is gone like a passing shadow—like a breath of evil wind that goes unseen, and leaves death and destruction behind."

CHAPTER III.

She made him of water a noble steed,
Whose trappings were formed from rush and reed,
To a young knight changed she then her son,
To Mary's church at full speed he's gone,
His foaming horse to the gate he bound,
And paced the church full three times round.

DANISH BALLAD, Borrow's translation.

“PUT up thy sword, James,” said Sir Michael, calmly; “thy time is not come to die. To thee was given the power to strike Lord Dacre dead; to wound Lord Stanley; and there thy power has ceased. Surrey thou couldst not smite, even hadst thou sought it. Nor, unless Heaven looses thy right-hand to fight in a righteous cause, canst thou harm a man whose strength exceeds that of a three years child.” “Alas! Michael,” answered Sir James, “what evil deed have I done, that Heaven's anger should rob me of my might even at my utmost need—should strike my strength into childishness, even in the midst of my enemies.” “Thy enemies have no power over thee,” replied the other: “thou art walking in the midst of them, yet they molest thee not. But come with me, our ways are one, and my master's commands must be

fulfilled." "If I cannot follow thee from love," answered Sir James, "I shall not stay back through fear;" so saying, they passed the English sentinels, and ascended the hill which overlooks Flodden-field.

Sir Michael led the way to a little spring which leaped from the face of a rock, and glittered like melted silver, as it fell through the beams of the moon. A crucifix was carved deep in the stone, and before it a sculptured warrior laid down his sword and helmet, and bowed his head before the holy symbol. "Behold!"—"said Sir Michael, "for to you, and not to me, this lesson is addressed. I say not to you as Remorse said to that valiant knight—renounce the world, and bow to stocks and stones; to things made by men's hands; to gods of human workmanship. But I say to you, humble your pride of heart; dismiss your evil passions; have faith in Heaven, and you will continue to be, as you have been to night, marvellously protected. The invisible world of God on earth will be revealed to you—your own eyes shall witness things which inspired men have only had revealed in visions and in dreams. Nor will the sight of Satan's kingdom be withheld. But for all this you must prepare your heart and mind; the daring heart, the strong arm, and the sword that sheers through steel like silk, will avail you no-

thing. But your wearied body needs repose—sleep, and no one shall disturb you."

A sudden love of sleep came over Sir James; he wrapt himself closely up in his mantle, laid down on the ground, and the morning stars were glimmering before he awoke. Sir Michael sat beside him on the grass. The challenge of the English sentinels, and the wild licence of a victorious camp, came at times to his ear: but he sat as still as the rock at his side, looking at the stars as they shone or shot athwart the sky. He arose, stood over Sir James, and with a low and melancholy voice chaunted the following verses: the sound crept along hill and vale, and all the sentinels stood as if rooted to the ground.

SIR MICHAEL'S SONG.

I.

He laid him down to sleep, Sir James,
 Soon gentle slumber came,
 The rivulet's voice sang in his ear,
 Mild as a lovely dame;
 With the voice of a young and lovely dame,
 Sweet, loving, meek, and low,
 The streamlet sang, and sound he slept
 Where Flodden's fountains flow.

II.

He laid him down to sleep, Sir James,
 The voice that to him came

Was deeper and more mournful far,
Than that of a sweet dame.
Than the voice of a young and gentle dame,
And it said, or seemed to say,
Where are my brave and stately sons,
Whom thou ledst yesterday.

III.

As I came down through Flodden vale,
I could no farther pass,
For there they lay my stately sons,
All trodden down like grass ;
All trodden like the new mown grass,
And I heard them make a moan,
O fatherless are our gentle babes,
And kingless is our throne.

IV.

I see you all my gallant sons,
Your sharp swords in your hands,
But where's the star of Chivalry,
The prince who ruled your bands ?
The prince who ruled your martial bands,
They murmured out a moan,
O fatherless are our gentle babes,
And kingless is our throne.

Sir James awoke with a start; grasped his sword, sprung to his feet, and gazed in agitation around him. He saw nothing but the grey day dawning on the mountain-tops; the stars twinkling pale, and he heard only the first note of the lark coming down from the cloud, and the murmur of the neighbouring stream. He stepped to the brow of the

hill, and gave a downward look. The English camp lay before him ; the watch-fires burned dimly, and the weary sentinels looked gladly to the hill-tops, cheered with the presence of day. He looked on his hands and dress stained in blood—on the blade of his sword ; and he took off his helmet, and saw blood and dust soiling the snow-white plume. “ Army, nobles, and throne,” he exclaimed, “ are mine no more, and a fugitive am I on the face of the earth. To what land can I fly to escape from myself : in what wilderness shall I be able to forget my country, and the power which I abused. For me, a devoted, an enthusiastic people have poured out their blood like water, and Scotland shall through many a future age bewail the rashness of her King and the slaughter of her children. The burning sands of Asia, or the雪s of the Pole, are all too good for one so vain and so culpable. But why imagine an anchorite’s life, when present death is before me. There lies Lord Surrey between me and my native land, and captivity or death awaits me.”

“ Sir James,” replied Sir Michael, “ fear neither death nor captivity. You have already been wonderfully preserved ; and were all the Howards holding by your mantle, you would foil and despise them all.” “ In you,” said Sir James, “ I have found a true counsellor and a stedfast friend, and something of the horror of the closing onset on the

battle-field ; of the midnight scene in the English camp ; of the terrible form which appeared in the haunted fountain ; of the scene of blood in Lord Surrey's tent, and my escape floats before my fancy and mind ; but I cannot distinguish what is real from what is illusory."

"I shall not read the riddle for you," replied Sir Michael. "Submit to the fortune which is to befall you ; profit by the lesson which is seldom given to mortal man, and believe that God rules over all, and controuls the conduct of angels and the actions of princes. Come therefore, cast fear of man behind you ; how often shall I multiply wonders, and how frequently must I re-assure one whose romantic credence has cost him so dear."

"Go on, Sir Michael," he answered : "I hear, believe, and follow." The day was now brightening in the east ; the sun in long lines of quick and quivering light announced his coming ; the stray deer rose on the Cheviot-side, and uttered a cry of gladness ; and the smoke from the cottage of the early peasant started thin and blue into the colouring sky. "Let us go on our way then," said Sir Michael ; and he went to a little stream which murmured down the gentle declivity, forming small leaps and pools on its way, and stood by one of the falls which made a singing din, and threw up a thin and vapoury mist into the brightening

air. It was now the moment of time between light and dark, and objects were growing more visible and bright as moment followed moment.

Sir Michael put his hand into the fold of his mantle and took out a small bridle, bitted with gold, and ornamented with devices and signs, and words which were in a strange and disused language. He shook it amongst the silvery mist, and looked to the eastern sky. Sir James saw the mist becoming more dense and opaque, and rising as high as a man from the ground. He heard the snorting of horses, and in a moment there started through the mist two palfreys, black as coal, with tails uncut, feet unshod, and manes flowing untrimmed and free. They uttered a loud neigh as they came, and standing still on the bank of the brook, shook the drops of dew or water from their sides and manes, and the moist spray which they threw into the air glittered as it fell like a shower of fire.

Sir Michael laid his hand on the mane of one of the palfreys, and leaped on its back, nor seemed the creature fond of its burthen, for it snorted, reared, and ran round like a wheel. "Fool," said Sir Michael, addressing it, "be quiet, and indulge thyself in no impish tricks, else I shall charm thee for ever into a shape thou wilt like far worse than that of a noble animal. Go smoothly, and see that

thou stumblest not." The creature, thus admonished, stood quiet and tractable while its rider said, "Sir James, mount that palfrey; lay thy hand on the mane thus, and make a vault; the luxury of a saddle was unknown to the school in which I learned to ride, and thou wilt not need it. What, hast thou survived red Flodden, and yet fearest one of my poor palfreys? mount, Sir Knight; for behold the avengers of blood are nigh thee."

Sir James turned himself round, and saw a score of mounted warriors coming spurring towards him; their helmets glittered in the kindling light; their swords were in their hands, and he heard them shout, "a Howard! a Howard!" The smoke streamed from the horses nostrils, and their hoofs beat thickly on the mountain ground. He laid his hand on the mane, sprung upon the palfrey, and away they went with the rapidity of light. They seemed less to run than to fly. Over hills and through dales they continued their fleet career, and the green hill of Flodden and its vale of blood was left many a mile behind.

"Sir James," said Sir Michael, "have you no praise to bestow on my incomparable steeds: see how they devour the way; feel how pleasantly they ride; are they not worthy of a song in their praise; nor knight nor monarch ever bestrode worthier." Often did Sir James look on their rapid flight; on

the receding hills, and vanishing streams, and oftener yet he looked on his companion. "Sir Knight," he said, "this art of thine equals the creations of romance. A dragon is a beast of daily burthen to this, and a winged hippogriff an ass of Mesopotamia. But will this creature of the watery element prove true on sharp trial?" "We shall speedily prove it," said his companion, and taking out a little ivory horn which hung at his girdle, he made hill and dale re-echo for many a mile."

Seven foresters with bows in their hands, broad arrows at their belts, and each holding a stag-hound in the leash, stood before them. "Who art thou," said the first forester, "that darest to wind thy horn so lustily? to strike the deer art thou come without leave from his Reverence of Durham; from his parks such knaves as thou art have lately picked the fattest of the flocks, and his Reverence is wroth." Loud laughed Sir Michael, and said, "Good fellow, thine eyes do their office untruly: seest thou not that we are men of peace, nor bow nor arrow have we: dost thou think we can slay the fattest of his Reverence's deer without hound or shaft?" "Thou art a Scotch knave," replied the forester, "and therefore deservest to be hung upon the forest-tree for a natural enemy as well as a striker of the church deer. We are on our way to the wood to strike

seven fat bucks to feast our warriors from Flodden. Thy countrymen are conquered or slain, thanks to the prayers of the chapter, to the lances of Durham, and shafts of Lancashire. And so, as it is rather a busy time with us, and we cannot spare a couple of leashes to knit two knaves up, if you will give us your palfreys you may begone, with the assurance of your being hanged when honest men find leisure."

"Thou art a very civil fellow, for a Southron," said Sir Michael, "and shalt have my palfrey; hast thou some skill in adhering to a wild steed's back?" "I rode seven years at the head of his Reverence's hounds—be praised for the pre-eminence," said the forester, "and can back a creature as wild as the devil, and as tameless as the sea."

Sir Michael sprung down and said, "Nay, then, thou art fit for mine, good fellow, and welcome with all my heart; but a child might back it; it goes as smoothly as a bird through the air."

The forester sprang instantly upon the animal's back, seized what seemed a bridle, and away he went; no shaft from his own bow, when a fat buck was within reach, ever flew swifter. A deep stream was in the way; the water flew high over horse and rider, and they seemed sunk in the current. In a moment the steed rushed back, and stood snorting and foaming by the side of Sir Michael,

while the unhappy forester rose from the stream with crushed ribs, and his pride in horsemanship much abated. "Who wishes for my palfrey," said Sir Michael, "a creature so quiet that he is worthy of being backed by a bishop?" "Confound thee and thy palfrey both, thou wandering Scot," said another forester, "thou hadst best begone, else worse may come on't. And ride not too massy, lest I pin thee to thy beast with a cloth-yard shaft." Sir Michael, like one who thought there was no harm in the advice, mounted his palfrey, and proceeded on his way.

"Now Sir James," he said, "seest thou not the faithfulness of my good steed; to no other man will it yield its body, and no other voice but mine will it obey." "You find," said the other, "the creation of your own hands wondrously docile; this art of thine I would gladly learn, if it be such as the church approves." "I hold my powers," said Sir Michael, "from a higher authority, and I work what neither the wisdom, the piety, nor the cunning of the church can do. And yet it is no great marvel to find a creature of the elements amid the materials of its formation. Of what art thou formed, man of dust, that thou shouldest boast thyself? Thou creature of perishable earth, dost thou rank thyself above a creature formed of a pure and eternal element? Canst thou

wing thy way like a thought? Can thy body resist the cloth-yard shaft, mock the descent of the axe, and the thrust of the spear? Canst thou feel like one who has been translated into the community of souls of just men made perfect? Canst thou form thy wish into what thou wilt? Canst thou controul the fierceness of national fury, disappoint thirst of blood, stop the arrow as it flies, the sword as it descends, or the ball from the cannon's mouth? No; thou art a poor worm of the earth, whom God permits to crawl on its surface till the day comes that will wither thee up, and give thy dust to the wind, and thy deeds to oblivion."

"I love thy speech, Michael," said the other, "fearful though it be; but behold how bright the sun dances on the spire of that little village. Hearken, too, to the music of the pipe and the rebeck; to the sound of the minstrel's song, and the din of the dancer's heel. What has moved the people to mirth; it is the birth-time of no saint; the martyrdom of no saucy churchman, nor has a king died to-day that the subjects of Henry should rejoice." "James," said Sir Michael, "this day will there be weeping and sadness in Scotland, and well may England dance and rejoice, her minstrels sing, and her rebecks and citterns sound. But here they come, filling all the road with their

numbers, and the air with their minstrelsy and mirth."

The sun was risen, and with its bright and horizontal beam kindled the uplands, and lightened the summits of the groves. Town, village, farm, and solitary cottage, poured out without reservation their happy inhabitants, animated and gladdened by the sound of victory which had flown over the land. Aged parents were there rejoicing in the valour of their descendants; the new made wife, and the new made mother, the bride whose bridegroom had left the altar for the defence of his country, and the young maiden whose wishes were not yet shaped, and who had only begun to feel the flutter of heart, which, like the trembling flush that precedes the ascent of the sun, is the forerunner of delicious and enthusiastic joy. Boys too were there with mimic bow and bill, and every step was buoyant, and every face was beaming. An old banner torn from Scotland in some border battle, waved high over head, surmounted by the flag of England; old men, with staves and spears cut down to a length proper to stay their steps, came foremost; next followed two harpers, and a player on the rebeck, who aided with their instruments the voices of a dozen young maidens, who made the vale re-echo with the following song:—

THE MAIDENS' SONG.

I.

Were ye at red Flodden,
And what saw ye there?
Ten thousand proud Northmen
Lie bloody and bare.
They fell 'neath our war-horse,
All foaming and hot;
They dropt 'neath our arrows,
And sank 'neath our shot.
There's weeping on Teviot,
On Tweed, and on Annan,
And deep Solway quakes
With the sound of our cannon.

II.

'Twas a proud sight to look on,
As light flashed abroad,
King James and his nobles
How gallant they rode.
As thick waved their lances,
As corn when it's ripe;
And gay their plumes nodded
To bugle and pipe.
Our war-horse rushed rudely
With lance and with arrow,
And there's weeping of dames
On the Nith and the Yarrow.

III.

Spur ye that are spared,
Through the Till and the Tweed,
For Howard's fierce chivalry
Chase ye at speed;

And tell how your trumpet
And war-pipe are mute ;
How your prince and your proudest
Lie trod underfoot.
Go mourn by the mountain,
And wail by the river,
The star of your chivalry's
Darkened for ever.

“I hear the tread of horses,” said one of the old men; “mine eyes are dim; Ralph Rugby look and tell me what manner of men the riders be.” Ralph looked on the riders, and said, “Why one rides as if the horse and he had been both made at once; a strong arm and a merry eye, and a look full of command.” “A gallant warrior, I'll warrant,” said the old man; “and what seems he who rides beside him?” “Why, Giles Featherston,” answered he, “the other rider has a man's shape sure enough, but he resembles more a stone statue taking the air, than a thing of flesh and blood. Mercy on us, but the horse he rides on is stranger still than himself; it wears no iron on its feet, moves without bridle, bears no saddle, a light glances from its mane, and its eyes would kindle wet straw. I wish old Abbot Plumpton were here to try horse and man with a word from Holy Book, for I'm no sinner if this be not a steed from the devil's stables.”

As Ralph spoke, Sir Michael and his compa-

nion came close to the head of the procession ; the old man looked up, and said, “Sir Knight, how fares our gallant army, and how many of those proud Scots have they slain ? Tell me truly, I charge you. I was a warrior in my youth, and fought against the Northerns, and it joys me to hear of battles won by the valour of England.”—“Old man,” said Sir James, “Scotland has lost army, nobles, and king, therefore shout and sing, for a braver army was never conquered.” “Ah ! Sir,” answered the hoary warrior, “Saint Thomas forgive me for talking of victory before the vanquished. I know the tongue of the North Country, and I know the people. A heavy hand have they in war, and a pleasant tongue in peace ; and a warrior is happy who fights with them, for he can have good blows in battle. Farewell, Sir Knight, and may the sorrow of captivity sit light on thy heart, and mayest thou win a battle some other time, against any other nation but old England.”

“A curse, an old man’s curse, a father’s curse, and a soldier’s curse, fall on them king and churl,” exclaimed another old man. “Their swords have slain me five fair sons, and when I followed them with all my kinsmen into their accursed country, we fell into an ambush, and I alone escaped to tell the loss, and avenge it. And how it was avenged, let Roxburgh and Melrose tell ; I count-

ed the slain by the light of their blazing rafters. I am on my way to Flodden to see the dead; I have ever loved to look upon Northern blood since the fatal fight of Forde; and they tell me the Till runs red at Twisel bridge, and that hill and vale are cumbered with corses. Saint George be praised, 'tis pleasant news to Anton Fenwick."

"Old man," said Sir Michael, "gray hairs, and love of human blood are unnatural, nor is it seemly in youth. Strike, but rejoice not; shed blood, but deplore it; for to Him above must a strict account be rendered of our deeds on earth, and we shall be rewarded as they are good or evil." "A priest, a preaching priest!" exclaimed old Fenwick; "one whose hands, when he holds them to Heaven, are red with innocent blood to the elbows. A priest, a very priest! one who preaches peace and good-will, but whose practice is slaughter, plunder, revenge, and gluttony. A priest, a merciful priest! who consecrates the sword that it may smite the surer, who blesses the spear that it may pierce the deeper. I hate a warrior much, but a priest more." And, setting his staff on the ground, and leaning forward, he proceeded with his companions on their pilgrimage.

"Sir Michael," said Sir James, as the procession went on its way, and the interrupted music and minstrelsy was resumed, it seems to me that

Satan himself might establish an infernal church on earth, and obtain believers and servants; raise a goodly revenue, exhibit a venerable catalogue of relics, and a long list of martyrs, and have his wild traditions and strange legends recorded on vellum, and illuminated on the margin, for the edification of mankind!" "And has he not, Sir James," replied the other, with a sarcastic glance? "has not man laboured at this for ages? Satan has stood looking on at the silent extension of his empire, and the growing triumph of riches, luxury, pride, and lasciviousness, over the shirt of hair cloth, the prayer at midnight, the rigid abstinence, and the life of holiness, simplicity, and charity. In how much thinkest thou does his crowned and mitred holiness the blessed father of the church, with the key of the bottomless pit in one hand, and of Heaven in the other; with his right foot on the necks of the kings of the earth—in how much thinkest thou does he resemble the meek and humble Saviour of mankind? Satan has a wide and growing empire; I will shew thee one of his chief seats on earth; it is at hand."

They turned aside into a noble avenue of stately trees of elm, oak, and chesnut, and rode along a way wide and well gravelled, with flowers and shrubs lining the road. A fair sheet of water lay before them, swans were swimming, ducks were diving,

and two men were pulling a net to the side, full of the most rare and delicious fish. A herd of fat bucks showed their horns through the polished shafts of a grove of trees; keepers, with bended bows and stag-hounds approached them; the arrow was seen starting from the string, and glittering through the air; the next moment it pierced the neck of a buck, which gave one bound, then dropt and died. The low of fattened cattle and of milch cows came from a rich extent of meadow, and the bleat of sheep was heard from the hill; the grunt of well-fed swine from a long range of pens, and the mingled cry of all manner of poultry from cavy and stack-yard. An orchard filled with the finest fruit lay to the sun, terrace rising over terrace of well pruned and luxuriant vines hung their thick clusters on all sides, and through the whole was heard the continual hum of bees which swarmed among the flowers, seeking treasures for the pleasure of man. In the midst of all this stood a stately abbey; the tops of its numerous pinacles were gilt with gold, while two portly personages sat sleeping at either side of the open gate; their staves in their hands, and brown vessels, which, under the pretence of holding water, contained the richest wine, sitting half drained beside them.

“Behold,” said Michael, “the place of which

I spoke ; see the image of its interior in the persons of its protectors, and listen to the sound which comes from its aisles and its cells ; it is not that of thanksgiving and praise.” As he spoke, the sound of laughter and song came echoing along the aisles, and their palfreys neighed and pranced like creatures delighted with the wild and unseemly din. “Dismount, and follow me,” said Sir Michael ; “I mean to shew you some of the mysteries of the empire of death and the grave.” They leaped down, and going up one of the long and gloomy aisles they came to a low iron barred and dusty door ; it opened as Michael touched it, and they both entered. There they found a lamp glimmering at the foot of a crucifix, where lay the sandal-shoon and mantle of the founder of the abbey, and a long rusty sword and helmet worn by a crusading baron, the endower of this devout establishment. On the floor, within the niche, stood an iron chest bound with strong bands, such as ten men might move, but not carry. The lid was raised, a light sparkled beside it, and there knelt the abbot himself ; not in prayer ; not in the contemplation of holy relics ; not stooping down in awe and humility before what the illuminated history of his establishment called “A relique of the true cross found by an angel on the Mount of Olives ;” but kneeling, and counting the sordid gains of the ab-

bey, won from the terrors of the dying, the fears of the timid, and the repentance of the rich. The gold glittered as he counted it over, and the crucifix and lamp shook as he clanked down the heavy lid, and proceeded slowly, and with protracted pleasure, to secure it from the spoiler.

"I have shewn you one of the promoters of the empire of the evil one on earth," said Michael, as he returned from the treasure cell. "To many a dying wretch has that gold promised admittance to heaven. The murderer's hand has it washed pure; the adulterer it has cleansed, the plunderer and the spoiler has it released from the guilt of their pursuits, and sent them with a light conscience to resume their evil practices. Dost thou see that door? over it is hung the scourge and the shirt of hair, the crown of thorns, the pilgrim's staff, and the anchoret's cup; enter, and behold how the scene within corresponds with the sign without." The door opened, and Sir James, though well acquainted with the license of court and camp, started back when he saw the revelry of the children of devotion and abstinence. Round a large table, loaded with the richest food, and flooded with the purest wine, the plates of silver, and the flagons of gold, sat, or rather reeled, the fathers and professors of penitence, sobriety, meditation, and devout learning. A priest full fed, fat, and of a

ruddy complexion, held a long pure glass of strong drink between him and the window, and eyeing it by a ray of light which shone through a virgin and child on the stained casement, chaunted the well-known Scottish song of “Good Ale,” to the clamorous accompaniment of clattering flagons and clapping of hands.

“ There,” he exclaimed, wiping the subsiding foam from his lip, “ there’s the praise of English ale from the lips of our enemies; out of the eater came forth meat; you know the holy romance. Father Forester, can you vindicate that sour decoction from the black Hamburg cluster which you hold in your hand with half the animation which the bonny Scot has eulogized our abbey ale?” “ I’ll tell thee, brother Ambrose, whom our peasants call Flagon Dick, I hold it unseemly in wise men and devout, to halloo vulgar ballads during a slight indulgence like this. My body has suffered from vigil and fast, and my voice is hoarse and impaired by singing holy anthems and protracted hallelujahs, and I may not comply with thy wish, even though I have a blank indulgence from his reverence of Durham for any breach I may make in the rules of the church.” And emptying the wine cup with a devout celerity, he replenished it again, and said, “ Ah, brother Ambrosius, the curse of heresy which begins to appear in this land has fallen

as a canker on our Hamburg cluster. The saint brought over the blessed vine, thou well knowest, in the form of a pilgrim's staff, he stuck it in the ground at our abbey gate, and prayed; and while he prayed his staff began to bud and shoot, and put forth the richness of its nature; and before the sun went down there were seventy clusters, black, heavy, and ripe, hanging on the blessed staff. Much I fear that the doubt and disbelief and heretical opinions in matters of drink, as well as devotion, have induced our patron saint to withdraw his protection; the grape has lost its rich flavour, and our religion will sink along with it.

This annunciation of Father Forester's called forth many a groan from the assembled brethren. "Let us drink from the well of Saint Wulfstone," said a monk, "there is much mysterious power still residing in the holy well. There came a cripple—both his legs were smitten off; he drank, and as he drank his limbs sprouted forth like the branches of our blessed patron's vine, and he leaped to his feet, threw away his crutches, and danced." "That is but little, brother," said another monk, "did the blessed water not raise up seed to the noble house of Wark? The lady was young and fair, and her lord absent on a pilgrimage, when she came and prayed in the evening with our good abbot, now a saint above, and took

a cup of water from the blessed well next her heart every morning. And so much was her bed blessed, that on her lord's return he found a fair boy sitting smiling on either knee. Thanks to the blessed water, the women around us are devout, and the place populous." And they resumed their intercourse with the wine cup and the ale flagon, the mirth was renewed, and the interrupted song resumed.

"There," said Sir Michael; "call you these servants of Satan, or of the saints? Behold that other door; there are sculptured holy nuns, silent, demure, and devout; see how the figures clasp their hands, look modestly down, and seem as pure as new created stars. Open the door, and compare the scene within to the symbols without: the soft and luxurious couches pressed by those dedicated to devotion, who have nothing pure about them save their garments; and who brought chastity to the convent, and lost it there. Look in, and behold them; are they kneeling; are they chaunting hymns; are they making raiment for the naked; nay, are they making raiment for their own babes? No. And yet I blame them less than I do the religion which has thus gambled them out of their virtue. She who is frail with him who forgives sins and can grant immunities to iniquity; who can sell a free admission into Paradise, and

with whom creed and chastity are alike infallible, may be blamed for her conduct less than for her faith." "Open not the door, Sir Michael," said his companion. "I can credit thee in this. Let us leave this place."

CHAPTER IV.

This world's a fine believing world.

BEAUMONT and FLETCHER.

THE sun was in its mid-day strength when Sir Michael, conducting his companion from the abbey of Blessinghame, entered a thick wood, and reaching a little sunny knoll which rose in its centre, sat down on the grass, for they were wearied with toil at night, and with their flight in the morning. “A stoup of wine, Sir James,” said his companion, “and a cake of spiced bread, would not be missed from the table of those revellers in the abbey; thou art wearied and way-worn, and unused to the privations which the children of misfortune endure. A cup of wine therefore, and a morsel of food, will strengthen and comfort thee, so ask and have it.” “A cup of water and a crust of bread were welcome,” answered Sir James, “for though my couch has been soft, and my fare dainty, I have sat at the humble hearths of the peasants of the land; tasted their food, and proved their hospitality; so coarse fare is as welcome as food from the board of a king, or more luxurious still, from the table of an abbot.”

Sir Michael blew a low shrill note on the ivory horn which hung at his girdle, and cried, “Bru-nelfin,” and Sir James, though somewhat inured to wonders, could not forbear starting, as he saw coming from the green wood bough, a half grown youth, bare armed, bare necked, bare headed, and bare footed; with black eyes, black locks, and a complexion as brown as a well ripened nut. He stood before Sir Michael, then vanished at the words “wine and food.” “By the splendour of heaven!” exclaimed Sir James, “thou hast good servants at command. To what element does this page of thine belong? he has an alacrity of look, a consciousness of what is required of him, which gross mortals can never attain.”

“He is neither wholly of heaven, wholly of earth, nor of the kingdom under the earth,” answered Sir Michael; “he is of the race of beings called Gods by our heathen ancestors; but the austerity of the early, and the profligacy of the later Christians, have driven them to the woods and the hills, to the rivers and the forests. To some he seems as an imp sent to tempt and betray; but to others he comes an obedient and useful friend; and the name of many a good deed is usurped by the cunning and pride of man, which is wrought by him alone. But see, he returns! that wine is rich, for it scents the forest as it comes; and the

smell of that food would lure the cormorant from the cloud.” A small damask cloth was spread upon the grass; wine sparkling in a golden cup, and a fowl dropping from the fire, and bread fragrant with spice, were placed upon it: then the page, retiring under the greenwood bough, folded his arms over his breast, and looked down in silence.

Sir James could not resist sitting down to this singular banquet. He stretched out his hands, and caused the food and the drink to disappear with a rapidity which would do honour to a priest in our own happy days of short graces, and long dinners. “This pullet now,” said he, “has been fattened by the diligence and skill of the church; in no unholier hands would these small bones have been blessed with such a load of what is tender and savoury. And this wine, neither the vaults of Falkland, nor the crypts of Holyrood, could produce ought so nectareous. Friend Michael, I may cry with Polyphemus in Homer’s song, ‘More! bring me more! this is divine!’” “And thou shalt be indulged James,” replied his friend, with a smile, “our friends at the abbey, who press the black Hamburg cluster, can spare thee as much as will make thee as merry as themselves. Replenish the cup!” The cup vanished, and was soon returned, brimful of wine, to the right hand of the knight.

“By the brown locks of Jane Douglas,” said

Sir James, “and by her bright eyes, too, this is wondrous. Thou art a glorious caterer, Sir Michael, and this brown equerry of thine has a nimble foot and a skipping spirit. Sit down by me, my nut-brown friend, and taste of my cup and my food. Hast thou never a harp or a dulcimer Childe, to waken into music?—I see thou hast a singing eye in thy head. I’ll warrant thou hast sat on a fold dike at milking time, and lilted to the merry maids of cold Caledonia. Come, a verse, my relique of heathenesse; I can drink and listen like any divine.” The brown page, thus pressed, warbled out several verses, which have been preserved imperfectly among the people of the North country.

BRUNELFIN’S SONG.

I.

I love ‘mongst groves and glens to range,
 When brown the nuts are hinging;
 I love ‘mongst pastoral lands to roam,
 What time the shepherd’s singing.
 The shepherd’s pipe, the reaper’s horn,
 The wild bee humming clearly;
 The milking pail, and thrashing flail,
 Are things I love fu’ dearly.

II.

A pleasant darke for man I work,
 At midnight when I’m saunterin’;

I seize the fox, and to his tail
 I hang a jack-a-lantern,
 I reaped one night ten acres good,
 To douce John Clarke of Cloonie,
 He clapt his hands, and shouted loud,
 My blessings on thee, Brownie.

III.

I 've safely brought the cannie wife,
 Through Annan chafed and foaming ;
 I 've shorn ten thousand sheep between,
 The midnight and the gloaming.
 There 's not a dame 'tween Tweed and Dee,
 From Durisdeer to Downie ;
 But waves her hand when she sees me,
 And laughs and cries out " Brownie."

IV.

I kindle the meteor in the moss,
 I light the glowworm's candles ;
 I trim the fairy's cornpipe clear,
 And tie his dancing sandals.
 The maiden bribes me with her smile,
 The dame with cream and honey ;
 For Elfin Brownie cannot be bought,
 By kingdoms coined in money.

" Cleverly sung, thou good brown page," cried Sir James, setting down the empty cup, " the wine made thy song glide charmingly away, and as song comes to thee spontaneously, and wine of its own accord, why a little more of both would make this lonely wilderness endurable." The page

glanced at Sir Michael, and fixing his large dark eye on the knight, stood still. Sir James, whose impetuous temper the wine had somewhat inflamed, laid his hand on his sword, and said, presenting the empty cup, “Come, fly, another cupfull of thy fairy nectar. What, thou sullen imp ! movest thou neither limb nor tongue ? Fill it, lest I give thy disobedience a blow.” And he threw the cup to the page, who placed it on the grass before him, and said,

“ I serve the kind, and I scorn the fierce, and neither threats, gold, tears, nor entreaty, have any force with one who is the follower and servant of the good, the virtuous, and the enemy of the overbearing, the lascivious, and the vain. I know thee, James, of old, and poor and feeble as I seem, I have punished thee for being false to thy vows, and for seeking to stain the pure and the beautiful.” “Thou brown bantling,” exclaimed the knight, “how darest thou presume to say, that thou hast punished me, and that I ever sought to injure what is lovely and pure?” The page uttered a wild discordant laugh, which made the bird start from the bough, and the deer from its den. “Aha ! Sir Knight,” he said, “wot ye not, that like an angel clad in glory, I stood before you at Falkland, and warned you against this war ! Wot ye not what I cried at midnight, in the middle of Edin-

burgh, which startled so many of Scotland's nobles, and well nigh brought the king from the side of Marjorey Sandilands? Wot ye not when ye went as a wandering harper to the chamber window of Bessie Carmichael, who appeared before you first as a light running along the ground; then as a spectre with glowworm's eyes, and fingers like a wolf's fangs; next in the shape of the young maiden herself, and finally in the form of a plump and pious priest, who admonished ye of your intended sin, with a scourge which was any thing but visionary? And wot ye who it was, Sir Knight, that came to you at the ford of Pittendoune, and saved ye from the iron hammer and glowing tongs of John Waldenheat, whose daughter your wisdom wished to woo? The long hairy arm, which raised a storm of blows on the blacksmith's head, was the self same arm which has handed you the wine cup, and spread the feast for you in the English desert."

Sir James laughed loud when the page concluded his speech, and said, " Fair fall thee, my little brown maker of merry mischief, let us be friends. Ah, I remember thy ministration in those matters well, and worthily didst thou acquit thyself in thy undertakings. So even in the words of thine own song I say, "My blessings on thee Brownie." Give me a shake of thy hand?" The Elfin drew back

from the proffered hand, the knight persisted in this Northern mode of ratifying friendly compact; the eyes of the former glanced with anger; the latter, unused to contradiction, started to his feet, urged, threatened, and drew his sword, and was about to use it, when Sir Michael blew his horn, and the thick and eager trampling of innumerable horses was heard, and the English war cry, which made the woods echo.

Sir Michael rose, and on looking down one of the wide green glades of the forest, saw the approach of the English chivalry; their helmets glittered in the sun; their drawn swords glanced as they moved, and they advanced like men eager to do some deed of arms, for there was a sore strife which should be foremost. “Sir James,” said Sir Michael, “molest not my page, his wiles and strength would foil five hundred such as you; here is danger of another kind, foes of flesh and blood.” Sir James looked, and his colour changed; his sword was in his hand, and placing his back to a spreading elm, he said, calmly, “Alive shall I never be taken, and here shall I die.”

“All this is supreme knight errantry,” said Sir Michael, “and worthy of James Stuart, who for the flattering letter of a wily queen promised to step three steps, and strike three strokes with a sword in England. Here you are not ordained to

fight, and here you are not doomed either to captivity or death. Brunelfin our horses quick." Ere he had well done speaking, the palfreys stood beside them; in a moment their hands were on their manes, and their thighs were over their backs, and away the palfreys started with a snort; the trees looked reeling and dizzy, the ground seemed running backward, the trampling of the English cavalry grew fainter and fainter, and the call of the trumpet more remote. They slackened their speed, and entered into conversation.

"Sir Michael," said Sir James, "your monkish wine made me chafe at our good page; who, with a spice of wickedness in his nature, has some kindly feelings about him, and seems adroit, imaginative, wilful, and roguish." "Of the wine," answered Michael, "one cupful makes men gladsome, cheerful, open, and affectionate; two cups make him fierce, froward, quarrelsome, and intractable; three cups give him a thirst for blood, and a ferocity which makes no distinction; and a fourth levels him with the beasts of the field, and renders him an object of scorn and abhorrence. My page is ever ready, active, and obedient: treat him with tenderness, and forgive his wild whims and strange sallies, as matters which belong to the grosser side of his nature." "I think I shall love him too," answered Sir James; "but, Michael, you are sin-

gularly economical in your establishment—steeds without saddles or bridles, and a well-beloved page without shoes and silver tags, or a bonnet with gold tassels, or a mantle of Lincoln green, richly embroidered."

" My steeds," answered Sir Michael, " know neither stall nor manger; and my page despises the costly vanities of the earth as much as I do. You should try to love these simple servants of mine, who can serve us better than the fleetest or the wisest of earth-born creatures."

" By the souls of my ancestors!" exclaimed Sir James, " I admire them entirely; and, as a proof of my regard, I would shoe these palfreys in solid silver, and bit their bridles with gold." " That smith is not yet born," said Sir Michael, " who dares to touch their fetlocks; they are the living spirits of the brooks, and only heard of in the gross and imperfect traditions of our country. For many a century they bore on their unwilling backs the evil spirits of darkness, and their name is associated with deeds of mischief and blood. Once—it matters not when or where—I was roaming at midnight by the bonnie green banks of a running stream, when I beheld an evil shape ascend from the earth; in one hand he held a whip, in the other a bridle, and standing over the rivulet, he threw a handful of the water into the

air, and lo ! there came from the stream a beautiful palfrey. The evil shape leaped on its back, and away it darted, with a shudder and a neigh of pain. I followed, and came to a little lonely mound, on which the midnight moonbeams lay. Amid the sweet light of the planet I beheld many a fearful shape. The evil spirit sprung down, and seated itself beside them. I caught the river-steed by the bridle, and said, ‘ Return to thine own element, and never more shalt thou bear an unblessed load.’ It sank at my feet, the shapes of darkness rose all and yelled, and sought to regain the bridle. It is now in my bosom. Satan’s power on earth is lessened, and the good spirits of the brooks are all my servants.” As he spoke, the horses tossed high their manes and snorted, as if aware of his kindness.

“ All this poets never dreamed of before,” said Sir James, and the world, though prone to indulge in many a vain belief, will hardly give it credence. I love, however, the good spirits of our native streams; and while I lived in rule, I unwittingly paid them respect, by keeping my chrystal rivulets free from the pollution of the poisonous dyes and impurities of manufactures. The shepherdess, who binds up her locks by the shining and watery mirror; and the reaper, who laves his hot brow in the stream, and eyes the mottled trouts darting

from side to side ; the deer, which stands and gazes at its small fleet limbs ; and the thrifty maiden, who bleaches her bridal-webs on its margin daisies, are the natural accompaniments of our Scottish streams. Is my pleasant nutbrown friend , of watery descent also ? ”

“ He is fit for any element,” answered Sir Michael ; “ and though of a mixed nature, is more for good than for evil. He was once in the slavery of the fallen spirits, and I had the good fortune to redeem him from the control of one who had chained him with a power mightier than he possessed to unbind. Listen, for it is also a wonderous tale. There lived a lord in this land, of mighty knowledge and great power, and his name was Lord Soulis ; but he applied his knowledge to evil, and his power to oppress mankind. All that he undertook prospered ; he built a castle, which defied alike the skill of his enemies to scale, or their cunning to undermine ; he plundered the English, and they could neither redeem the spoil nor vanquish him ; he harried the Scotch, and defeated their ablest captains, and he gathered great wealth ; but with his wealth mistrust of mankind came, and he locked himself up at night in a strong and lonely chamber, and slept amidst his treasure. Now it happened that my page had for centuries dwelt in this lord’s family, and to his

foreknowledge and art men imputed his master's success and good fortune. When he saw his lord troubled about his treasure he dug a pit, and aided him in removing his gold thither; and when his lord saw his treasure in safety, he said, 'Now for a faithful servant to watch over it, who shall hinder alike the power of the prince of darkness and the might of men to remove it;' and by a strong enchantment he fixed Brunelfin to watch beside it, and returned to upper air. And the lord died suddenly, and his castle was thrown down, and no one knew where to find his gold, or how to seize it from the elf, for a spell compelled him to defend it. Now it happened when Robert the Good came to Lochmaben, and gathered his vassals for the redemption of Scotland, he knew not where to find treasures to enable him to war successfully with the strength and riches of Edward. 'So please you, sire,' said Sir Roger Kirkpatrick, 'in the old castle of Liddel there is an enchanted vault filled with treasure, over which an elf or demon watches; if the treasure is ever to be used, it cannot be employed in a better cause than for Scottish freedom, and if my liege likes, I shall try to make the goblin give up its trust.' The king smiled, consented, and Sir Roger rode onwards to Liddel, pondering how this redemption could be wrought. 'If it can be

done by sharp steel,' muttered the hardy knight, 'the goblin shall yield its gold; if it can only be accomplished by prayer and spell, the saints must aid me, else I shall return empty handed;' and he dismounted from his horse, removed several fragments of the fallen tower, wrenched an iron door from its hinges, beat open a second with a single stroke of his axe, and burst into the treasure vault. The light of his armour made the elfin start. 'Brown elf,' said Sir Roger, 'yield thy gold, else take the dint of my axe, which has severed the iron staples of thy massy doors like reeds.' The elf laughed till the vault re-echoed and said, 'Thy axe, Roger Kirkpatrick, is not made of metal that can do me harm, and my gold thou canst not have.' The knight brandished his war-axe, but it stuck in the air; he drew his sword—it twisted like a serpent in his hand; he sprung on his adversary, and was thrown on the floor with such force, that all the cavern re-echoed to his armour, and the sound reached me as I sat in the moonlight, meditating how the adventure of the treasure might be achieved. I came and touched the elfin with my rod, and the knight with my hand; the gramery which bound them was dissolved; the elf bounded into the open air, shouted wild from dale, hill, and turret-top, 'Blessings on the hand which

saved me from slavery : I shall be its servant.' Sir Roger took the treasure, Bruce fought, and Scotland was freed ; but Brunelfin is still my servant, and well I love him for his faithfulness ; he is with me wheresoever I go, and I dread neither man nor evil spirit when he is by me."

" By my faith, Sir Michael," said the knight, " he is a worthy page, and I honour him for his fidelity. But tell me, is that the elfin brown, in the shape of a speckled thrush, which has flown from tree to tree, singing all the way ; or, rather, has he transformed himself into that nimble squirrel, which runs side by side with us, and still looks on us from every shrub and tree ? " " I know not," said Sir Michael, " in what form he may chuse to follow, but well I know that he is nigh at hand." A loud startling laugh from the wood gave audible assurance of his presence, and a white horned owl fluttered away among the shafts of the trees, uttering a loud cry.

" Sir Michael," said the knight, " what is become of those enemies whom we so lately saw, and from whose hands we so opportunely escaped ? " " Look behind thee, Sir Knight," said Sir Michael, " and tell me what thou seest." Sir James looked behind him, and he saw, not without fear, a company of armed knights in close pursuit, accompanied by archers and musqueteers on horseback,

from whose bows and harquebusses, arrows and balls began to come in a mingled flight. “ Fear them not,” said Sir Michael, “ their shots cannot harm you, their arrows cannot pierce you, nor can their swords or spears work you the smallest annoy. It is Lord Surrey and his chivalry, and he hopes to take thee dead or alive to the footstool of King Henry.”

Sir James looked behind him, his blood rushed fiercely to his brow, a wild light streamed from his eyes, and wheeling round his horse, and drawing his sword, he urged him back on his pursuers. He closed with them in a moment; and so rapid was the motion of his horse, that he had not time to use his sword till the foremost knight was thrown to the ground, horse and man; and the one who succeeded shared the same fate. The bearer of the royal banner rode in the middle of the party, a knight renowned for his strength and courage; the steed of Sir James sprung with his forefeet against his side, and banner and bearer rolled on the grass. The palfrey then started away, as a falcon from a flock of doves which he has chased and torn.

“ I would fain try a gray-goose shaft on that coal-black steed,” said a Tynedale archer, drawing his bowstring to his right ear as he spoke, and sending an arrow after Sir James. “ Hurrah for

Giles's arrow!" shouted a brother archer, fitting, as he spoke, a shaft to his own bowstring, "for it flies over the forest trees as high as the goose that fledged it. I shall try the rider's Kendal mantle with mine." Though drawn by a strong and experienced hand, and directed by a practised eye, the shaft struck the ground a quoit's cast and no more before the archer, and all his comrades laughed. "I shall try him with lead," said a musqueteer, presenting his harquebuss as he spoke. The ball, instead of following the aim of the soldier, went whistling amongst the forest boughs. A shower of leaves, and loud laughter, succeeded the shot. "Nay, then," said one, who carried a long lance dyed three feet and more up the shaft with blood at Flodden, "since neither shaft nor ball can touch him, it is plain that steel must do it; but what steed, unless it had wings, could come up with yon fiery palfrey!"

"These southern churls drew sharper shafts against James Stuart and his chivalry yesterday than they draw against thee to-day," said Sir Michael, "for on Flodden-edge they flew like the geese that fledged them, in flocks of hundreds at once; but these encounters and pursuits serve to cheer the way, and enliven the listlessness of a long journey, and I am desirous of amusing thee as much as I can in our lonely road." "I thank

thee, Michael, for thy attention," answered Sir James, but these shafts and balls might mar thy good wishes, since my garments are not of proof." "Art thou an unbeliever still?" replied Michael; "did I not save thee, when all our nobles were destroyed; have I not conducted thee safely from dangers thick and certain; from the spears, and shafts, and bullets, of thy sworn enemies? Thou art as obstinate as King James was: he was warned by a vision, admonished by cries from the grave, yet he believed not, and allowed the sweet words of a woman of France, and the white arms of a Northumbrian dame, to guide him more than words from heaven, and warning from the tomb."

"Sir Michael," exclaimed Sir James, "thou art as much of a churl as a knight, else thou wouldest not insult me by naming misfortunes such as those which have been so dearly atoned! I seek not thy counsel, neither covet I thy company." "Thou must have them both nevertheless, Sir Knight," answered the other; "the bark can no more be separated from the branch, yet the branch live, than I can be separated from thee, unless for thy certain downfall and destruction. Wouldest thou know how weak and miserable thou of thyself art? Return then, and face the lances of thy pursuers; try on them thy whole strength, and feel how feeble and ineffectual it is

without other aid. Nay, go and try, for I read distrust and suspicion in thy looks. I shall not interfere: thou shalt know how much thou canst do of thine own strength—go, go."

Sir James, whose fiery impatience of nature was not yet sufficiently humbled by misfortune to allow him to judge with prudence and sagacity, felt all the knight-errantry of his character start into action with the taunts of Sir Michael, and wheeling his horse round, and confronting his pursuers, darted upon them at once. But ere he reached them, by a full lance's length, blood streamed from all the wounds he received at Flodden, he swooned in his seat, dropped lifeless to all appearance on the sward, while an hundred men in mail leaped from their horses to seize the wounded knight. They stood and looked on the ground, and on one another, in silence and wonder: a moment before they beheld a knight sheathed in mail, his sword in his hand, and his war-horse urged to full speed, come rushing upon them; they saw him reel in his seat, fall to the ground, and now they beheld nothing but the forest tree and the trampled sod.

"Saint George and honest England," exclaimed a Yorkshire knight, "against Scotland and all its gramery; were any priest by to confess me, now my words would be, "James King of Scots sat this

moment on horseback before me, his helmet on his head, his crown above his helmet, his banner spread, and his sword drawn.” “ Then wouldest thou confess an untruth, Sir Edmund Robinson,” said one of his companions, “ for the Scottish knight who came forward to charge us even now, had neither crown on his helmet, nor banner displayed before him, though he seemed a stalwart warrior, fit to do battle for his ladye love, or his country.” “ You are both wrong,” exclaimed Sir Harry Harcla, “ for the warrior who advanced upon us even now, resembled one of those wild Saracens with whom our ancestors contended for Jerusalem of old. His head, his feet, his breast, and arms were bare; he carried a javelin in his hand, and his horse, unbroke to saddle or bridle, came onward like an eagle in flight, and with its teeth and forefeet was a match for a stout warrior.” “ But whether king, knight, or Saracen,” said Sir Thomas Percy, “ it matters little, since he is nowhere to be seen. I saw him fall from his horse to the ground, and from that moment I beheld him no more. He could not dissolve himself into water, and mingle with that stream; he could not melt himself into air, and vanish with the viewless wind; where can the warrior be?”

“ Lord enlighten thee, Sir Thomas Percy,” said a veteran archer of his own band, “ these border

Scots can make themselves into any thing. I'll warrant that the wild fox which I just now saw with a weasel on its back, was the Scottish knight and his steed. Bless thee ! Hugh Hepburn of Mewross, could have made a haystack into a horse, and a bundle of spears into a band of armed men. I once heard him whistle fifty stark warriors out of Tarras moss : thou wouldest have thought armed men grew in the flow, and that they only waited for the word of the magician to start into existence and action. And by my faith they were as stout soldiers as ever drew sword or levelled lance."

"Lord love thee ! Ned Doughton, how thou talkest," said a Kendal archer, drawing his bow, and fixing his eye upon a large gray stone in the middle of a little rivulet which meandered through the wood. "I saw the knight and his horse ride into that stream, and sink away like a silver mist. Never trust me, Ned, but yonder gray stone knows something of the matter. I saw it rise from the water as the horse and rider sank, I shall try what one of my sharpest shafts thinks on't."

As he spoke he discharged his arrow, it struck the stone, sunk deeper than the barb, and stood and quivered as if the object which it penetrated were endowed with life. "Kendal for ever," exclaimed several voices, "our shafts can pierce steel plate or solid stone like satin or like silk."

Many knights left their horses, and ran to look at the wondrous shot. “ It is as hard as the nether millstone,” said a soldier, striking the stone with his war-axe, “ and turns the hard edge of my hatchet, which has a temper that can chop flints.” “ It is as hard as the anvil my sword was hammered on,” said another soldier, striking the gray rock with his blade, “ and yet Kendal Dick’s arrow has sunk into it like a knife into Christmas pudding. Dick, thou art a warlock, and thy shafts and thyself should be burnt together.” The archer sought to regain his arrow; but it seemed grown into the stone. “ It is all magic together,” said a soldier, whose head was gray, and who was conversant with all the strange beliefs of the border; “ it is all magic; this is enchanted ground, and if we speed not the faster away, we shall be turned into deer, and our horses into hounds, and shall be chased through the fairy wood till the resurrection.” Some shook their heads and moved on, while others, though they talked of idle superstitions, beliefs, and the protection of the saints, were not slow in following, and the whole party soon emerged from the close forest to the open plain, and pursued their way without interruption.

Meanwhile, Sir Michael sat alone beneath a huge and spreading oak which grew on the summit of a little mound in the forest. A small pool

of water glittered in the sun before him ; a pair of wild swans enjoyed the secure fountain, and threw up the water in streams with their wings, stretched their necks and grazed on the grassy margin, apparently unconscious of any one's presence. In a moment, however, they stood upright in the water, raised their heads high over the banks, and looked round ; then extended their wings, rose abreast into the air, and disappeared over the summits of the trees. The approach of something human had startled them, and Sir Michael soon saw Brunel-fin and Sir James riding together up a winding glade ; and no wonder that he smiled, for they rode strangely.

One moment Sir James sat fairly and gracefully on his horse ; another, he was laid across like a sack of corn, then he rode with his face to the horse's tail, and soon that position was resigned for a seat on the ground. He was remounted, unseated, and upset so often that his patience was exhausted ; he strove to draw his sword, he could not find the handle, he sought to strike the form which annoyed him, and he struck the trees ; while at every strange involuntary gambol which he made there was a wild shout raised, and the whole forest for a full mile round seemed to join in a chorus of laughter at his distress. Of the form which wrought him all this annoyance he formed

many strange opinions. Sometimes it seemed a hedgehog which rolled before him ; sometimes a bat which hovered round his head, brushing his face with its leathern wings ; then an adder darting from its coil, or a little blue flame which danced in the air before him, blinding his sight and bewildering his judgment. Once he felt something breathing over his shoulder ; he looked round and shrieked in dismay at the infernal visage which presented itself, and a hundred tongues laughed around till the whole forest rang.

Brunelfin reassumed his usual form, and walked slowly by the side of the knight, combed his long elf locks with his long lean fingers, laughed at the looks of curiosity or suspicion with which Sir James regarded him, and burst at times into wild and irrepressible fits of singing. The songs which he sung were all concerning himself. The following verses remained long on the memory of Sir James :

I.

Oft with the mirthsome fairy
I dance beneath the moon ;
Or, with the crooked lightning,
I run the waves aboon.
I run around the mountain top,
Till stars with fear grow blind,
Then off I go careering
Before the viewless wind.

II.

Yestreen the moon shone dimly,
As I went gaily by
The dame with rod of rowan tree,
Drove home her frightened kye,
The owl was silent, and the fox
Howled, and ran round about;
And all the candles in the sky
Went dancing in and out.

III.

As I sailed down Dalgoner glen
An hour before the dawn,
Three witches round a will-o'-wisp,
Were dancing on the lawn;
And all the dead men rose and danced,
And all the women too;
And clatter clatter went their feet,
Among the dropping dew.

IV.

And all the dead men shouted,
And all the witches sang,
O welcome merry Elfin,
And down to earth I sprang.
Then round and round we merrily went,
Nor spared we shanks or shoon,
And well I mind the tune they played,
“ ‘Tis merry ‘neath the moon.”

V.

John Thomson’s ship on Solway sailed,
And merrily o’er the foam

I heard the gladsome mariners
Shout at the sight of home.
An old dame off her slipper flung,
I wot she flung it high;
The ship went down head foremost,
I heard the drowning cry.

CHAPTER V.

The queen of the fairies keepit me,
In yon green hill to dwell ;
And I'm a fairy lith and limb,
Young lady view me well.
We sleep in rose buds soft and sweet,
We revel in the stream,
We wanton lightly on the wind,
Or glide on a sunbeam.

TALE OF TAMLANE.

WHEN Sir James approached Sir Michael, he was regarded with an austere look. "Creature of earth," he said, "how long wilt thou follow the folly of thine own heart; how long wilt thou run thine own wilful and headlong career; and when will the terrible lessons of humility, which heaven has been teaching thee, become visible in thy thoughts and deeds? Man of untameable and unteachable heart, when shall I find in thee a mild and meek companion, who will fulfil heaven's behest with willingness and thankfulness? who will journey with me where man's foot has seldom been, and prepare his spirit for the change from earthly sorrow to immortal joy?" "Go on, Sir Michael," said the knight, "and I will follow thee, nor for once

question thy right to guide and direct me : I feel that without thee my own might is as a cobweb against a steel lance." "It is well, Sir James," he replied, "dismount, and let us refresh ourselves." He dismounted, seated himself on the ground, and enjoyed the sunny warmth of the air, and the autumnal beauty of the woods.

"Sir Knight," thus begun Sir Michael, "we have a laborious and wonderful adventure to undertake ; lackest thou drink and food ? Speak ! here is my page, and any rich man's table from Pentland to Penzance, shall yield us a morsel, else he has lost all his skill. On the dinner table of King Henry there smokes a peacock, stuffed with spice, wilt thou have a wing ?" "Let Kings who reign enjoy royal food," replied Sir James, "alas ! their life is one of anxiety and apprehension. They are too high to be happy, and have too much power not to make mortal enemies by their use or abuse of it. Let Henry have his peacock stuffed with spice, and may his sleep be sound, and his dreams pleasant." "I see a man, a holy man," said Sir Michael, "one whose looks are meek and austere, and whose dress is coarse and mean ; he has some crumbs before him, which may suffice a man so meek as thou. The holy man's table is of solid silver ; the vessels which are on it are of pure gold ; and as much marrowy food, and as much delicious

wine are there as would gladden three such knights as thou. Wilt thou share with this humble follower of the meekest spirit that ever lived on earth?" "Let him wallow amid his luxuries," answered Sir James; "let him quaff wine, and slumber on velvet couches; he will waken yet on a bed of reeds, and sit down and be thankful to a cup of cold water and a crust. Change is at hand."

Sir Michael smiled, and proceeded. "There is a man, great in the market place, whose wisdom is a gospel on 'Change; to whose warehouses every wind of heaven wafts the abundance of the mainlands, and the sweetness of the isles; whose scripture is his ledger, and whose ten commandments are the commercial laws which regulate the pecuniary intercourse of nations. His table smokes with costly dishes, is loaded with rare wines, and the merchant kings of the island are listening to a brief grace from the lips of their entertainers. Wilt thou have a dish and a cup from his table?" "Truly no," answered Sir James; "a cluster of nuts and a mouthful of water will suffice, and here they are;" and rising as he spoke, he plucked some nuts, and ate them, and lying down to the fountain before him, he drank long and gladly, and was refreshed. "I see now, Sir James," said Sir Michael, "that you are taming down the gross and sensual spirit within you, and that you will soon be pure and fit

for beginning the glorious and wondrous journeys which heaven has ordained for you. Betake yourself to slumber."

Sir James threw himself hastily down, folded his arms and body closely in his mantle, and he awakened when the morn shone brightly over the forest of oak, and threw her image on the little clear pool of quiet water before him. Two dark horses stood beside the pool, looking down into the pure undimpling mirror. Sir Michael and his companion mounted, and rode down a grassy and expanding glade, where the moonbeams made every dew-drop into a diamond, and showed the doves and wild birds roosting quietly on the tree tops. So smoothly they moved, and so rapid was their motion, that they seemed rather to fly than to run; the trees vanished, the stars ran backward, and the grass seemed growing under their feet in long undeviating lines.

"And what is become of my nut-brown friend?" said Sir James, "he who flashed in my sight like a wild fire; hooted in my ear like an owl; crawled in my path like a serpent; gazed over my shoulder like an imp of darkness, and then, assuming his own modest look, and customary shape, came and took the whole merit to himself of having rescued me from those pestilent accompaniments." A wild laugh, which made all the forest ring, and the

birds flutter, announced the presence of Brunel-fin. "Ah," said Sir James, with a smile, "art thou there, my merry comrade. I cannot see the colour of the wings which carry thee, but thou hast an art which I would willingly learn: thou canst compel a cloud to bear thee, or thou canst ride between the wings of the grey bat, or the horns of the owl, and cause a will-o'-wisp to light thee o'er mire and mountain."

A wild laughing voice, which seemed to come down from the tree tops, said, "Thy body and thy spirit are too gross to ride with me. The steed which carries thee is a more meet companion, and it can bear thee farther than thou hast courage to venture. Ask Garpal, thy horse, and he will tell thee if it be true?" Sir James replied, "Thou merry trickster, I know what thou wouldest do; but come, let me hear thee speak instead: there the wish is wished, come, what says Garpal?" Garpal tossed his dark mane high in the air, a light seemed to quiver from his eyes, and a song wild and unearthly came to the ear of the knight, which though melodious and pleasant, seemed to have as much of a neigh mingled with it, as a highlander's song has of the drone of his bagpipes. It was musical after its kind.

GARPAL'S SONG.

I.

Come mount me, and fly
 As man ne'er flew on steed,
 I can bear ye through Thames
 As I've borne ye through Tweed.
 No darkness can daunt me,
 No tempest can stay me,
 No charm can impede me,
 Or terror dismay me.
 The shaft flies in vain
 After me from the quiver,
 For I float o'er the earth
 Like the foam on the river.

II.

The daisy ne'er droops,
 Where I set down my foot,
 My shape shows no shade
 Through the light as I shoot.
 My dark meteor mane,
 As I fly flashes wider ;
 And the gleam of my eye,
 Is the lamp to my rider.
 My stamp stays the tide,
 My neigh sinks the shallop ;
 Towers rock, and walls quake,
 Through the earth as I gallop.

III.

And yet do I go not
 In anger and wrath,
 To sweep all that's lovely
 And sweet from my path.

I've stayed when the minstrel
Waxed warm with his story,
Of the young hero fallen
On the field of his glory ;
I've looked and been sad
O'er the sweet baby sleeping ;
O'er childles, old age,
And the young widow weeping.

A wild laugh succeeded the wild song, and Brunelfin exclaimed, " My blessings on thee, Garpal, were I thy master now, I would serve thy corn in a silver manger, and thy drink should be honeysuckle dew." " Peace, thou noisy thing," said Sir Michael, " we are now on the limits of fairy ground, and thou must neigh no more songs for the amusement of this bold knight, who has a deed to do before the moon is in the ocean." They stood on the margin of a small stream, which trickled beneath the projecting blades of grass on its banks like liquid silver. The ground rising beyond it, sloped gradually into a hill, clothed on the sides with thick woods, over which its grassy summit looked green and beautiful, steeped in the dewy light of the moon.

Sir Michael held his hand towards the top of the hill, and said, " Sir Knight, this is an adventure which can be achieved by a mortal arm ; by a creature not yet exempt from sin, but it is only for the tameless heart, and the fearless hand, and thou

hast both; follow me." As Sir James crossed the stream, his horse sank from beneath him, and he looked and imagined that he beheld it running wild along the opposite bank, snuffing the sweet night air, and tossing its mane in all the joy of freedom. Sir Michael stood beside him, for his palfrey had vanished at the same time, and touching his arm said, "No creature made by spell can climb the consecrated hill of the Good Folk; we shall speedily repair the loss, for in every living thing, the stream, the tree, the shrub, the flower, there is a spirit infused by the Creator for the use of man, if he had the ingenuity to evoke it. What thinkest thou now? Would two steeds, fashioned from these two ragworts, suffice us for this adventure; or stay, I see something better; thanks to thee, my merry Elfin. See those two foxes: their brown mouths are wet with the blood of the fold, and they have left an ewe new killed to follow the glamour light of my brown servant. Take them, my faithful Elfin, to the fairy-well; sprinkle them with the water, then bring them to me, I have use for them. Blessed is the art which takes the kid from the lion's mouth; the singing bird from the eagle's claw, and the ewe lamb from the tooth of the fox."

Brunelfin took away two foxes, and came back with two steeds. "There, mount, and spare not,"

said Sir Michael; “tame its vicious nature, for it is thus the fairies ride. On Hallowmas eve there lurks not a fox on Criffel-fell or Cheviot side, they are hunted from their dens and lairs by fairy imp and elf, and spurred over hill and holm till they are gasping and foaming. The very sheep in the folds bleat with joy as they pass, and the black cock crows with gladness.” Sir James leaped on his new palfrey, and he soon found that it retained all the cunning of the stock whence it sprung. It exhausted all its wiles in attempts to throw him; he maintained his seat as if he had grown to it, and when the creature found that it had not art enough to unseat him, it went quietly and swiftly along in the way he directed it.

They had now left the path which went round the hill, and the ground over which they rode was covered with a short sward of grass, as soft as velvet, and sprinkled here and there with knots of old trees, whose hoary and hollow trunks seemed to have stood the storms of a thousand winters.

The moon glowed down from mid Heaven; the streams returned her form as brightly as she beamed above; the whole earth was flooded with light so strong that nuts might have been gathered from the boughs, and wild plums from the trees. The owl sat mute on an old castle-wall; farm, town, cottage, church, and church-yard, with all

its flat tomb-stones shone in silence, and the broad shadows of the groves of oak lay painted on the lighter and livelier green of vale and hill. Sir James and his companion moved forward ; the former admiring the splendour of the scene, and the latter like a man accustomed to the sight, and whose emotions had long since subsided into tranquil love.

They came to a grassy hollow which ran round the hill, dividing it about midway ; the experienced and martial eye of the knight perceived in this the relics of an ancient entrenchment, and through a sally port, or opening, which time, and the continual movement of sheep at pasture, had nearly obliterated, they continued their ascent. As they proceeded they heard a sound of instruments of music, mingled with the melody of the human voice ; the sound seemed every where, and the ground on which they rode trembled, and the groves around them shook. Sir Michael motioned his companion to silence, and riding into the shadow of a cluster of oaks, they sat still for a little time. The sound increased more and more, chiefly along the way they had come. A quivering, and a vivid light ran along the ground ; the light was followed by a pennon which danced in the air like a beam of the sun, now high now low, but ever rustling and glittering as it moved.

“ It is the Fairy procession,” said Sir Michael, “ and yon is the meteor pennon which flies before them, showing the way. Once every year, as this night returns, they ride thrice round this hill, rejoicing in minstrelsy and song for the destruction of the army which cut that entrenchment along their immemorial inheritance, and soaked it with human blood. There they come; see how fair and how beautiful they are, and how lovely they look, compared to the miserable children of men.” Sir James could scarcely credit his eyes when he saw squadron succeeding squadron of the Fairy Folk coming riding along the grassy hollow of the old entrenchment; their horses were all as white as snow; their bridles glittered like gold; were very small and nimble, and leaped rather than ran. The riders might not exceed the height of standing corn, their heads, hands, and feet were bare, and their hair, a glistening golden brown, descended upon their short green mantles, and danced in the wind as they went. Some carried citterns and dulcimers, and shepherds pipes, in their hands, and short golden bows, and their quivers hung at their backs; others bore vessels of gold, from which they poured wine and incense upon the ground, and several had wings expanding from their shoulders, which they shook as they went, and a dewy perfume filled all the air. In the middle company

rode a virgin of incomparable beauty ; a long silver veil fell over her person, and floated on her palfrey, which concealed her loveliness but little ; through it her pure person shone as if her body had been of sunshine ; she wore neither gold nor gems ; a fillet, like a silver thread, enclosed her head, restraining the luxuriance of her hair, and a small hazel rod was in her hand.

When the two knights reached the passage over the old entrenchment, the pennon hung motionless in the air ; the Fairy Folk sat motionless on their palfreys, those who bore instruments of music breathed out a sweet low air, and those who had cups spilled wine and incense on the ground. The virgin threw back the veil from her face, a radiance streamed from her tresses, and five hundred voices, exquisitely sweet, united with her in chaunting the following song of rejoicing :

THE FAIRY-FOLKS SONG.

I.

Come sing, dance and sing,
See how green grows the sod,
Where the battle shout rose,
And the war-horses rode.
See the turf all with flowers
Is enamelled and gilt,
Where the death-strokes were struck,
And the life's blood was spilt.

II.

We beheld the fierce foes
On their errand of ill,
Like a dark stream of lightning
Descend from the hill.
Their onset was furious,
Their war-cry was loud,
And the blood-crow above them
Called down from the cloud.

III.

We saw them at sun-rise
Pour down to the strife,
All strong men rejoicing
In mid-day of life ;
We saw them at sun-set
Lie gory and heapt
As grass when it's mown,
Or as corn when it's reapt.

IV.

Then sing, dance and sing
On our green hill aboon ;
In pureness and glory
We go 'neath the moon.
The bright stars above us,
The clear streams below,
Shine and sparkle—they seem
Of our gladness to know.

V.

Come sing ye—for war
On our land never more
Shall stamp down the heel
Of his iron boot in gore.

No sound shall be ruder
Than songs of the lark,
Or maids whispering love
'Tween the light and the dark.

The song ceased, the virgin veiled her face, and the Fairy procession swept onwards round the hill, and soon nought was seen save the radiance above their meteor pennon, and nought heard save the sound of their pleasant minstrelsy. "All that God has created," said Sir Michael, "is useful after its kind; to those beautiful and happy creatures tradition has ascribed malignant qualities, and if you credit the minstrel's song, and the maiden's tale, you will fear them more than admire them. You have seen their persons, how fair they are, and you have heard their love of peace expressed in one of their inspired lyrics. You shall yet have a better opportunity of judging how acceptable their deeds must be with God, and how useful they are to thankless man."

When they reached the last line of trees which encircled, as with a garland, the top of the hill, Sir James beheld a circle of large grey stones enclosing the summit; from the top of each stone streamed a light; over the centre hovered the fairy pennon, and underneath were seated in line surrounding line the Fairy Folk, their mantles unclasped from their bosoms, their citterns, and pipes, and cups,

and bows in their hands; their virgin leader in the middle, and all the green-sward between their ranks covered with fruits of all kinds, congealed dews, frozen essences, and combs of wild honey. On the wondrous light above, and the marvellous meeting below, Sir James gazed long, and a strong desire came upon him to join in the banquet, and mingle with the Good Folk.

Sir Michael, who seemed to read his wishes in his looks, said, in a low tone of voice, “These lovely creatures, made for happiness and peace, allow none to come among them uncalled, and those who have rashly ventured into their presence have rued it deeply. Yet to speak to them, to win their love by prudent boldness, or by mildness and courtesy, thou art come here; see that therefore thou bearest thee as a bold and gentle knight; for rudeness they will resent, and cowardice they will punish.” “Tell me,” said Sir James, “what is to be gained of either glory or good by this adventure, and what influence it will have over my future fortunes?” “Thou speakest wisely, Sir Knight,” replied the other; “thy gain will be great, and the influence which thy success will have on thy future fortunes will be more than even thou canst now understand. What thou hast to achieve is this. Look on yon fairy festival; see a golden goblet is going from hand to hand, and

from lip to lip ; it is brimful of the most delicious nectar, and whatever man wishes to drink, as he sets the blessed cup to his lips, the fairy cup contains. A thousand knights and nobles have longed for that blessed cup, and have sought by valour, and by wisdom, to win it, yet they have all failed ; to no mortal lips was it ever held, but to those of our glorious William Wallace, when he was thrown for dead from the prison of Ayr, and to the feverish lips of the good King Bruce, when borne on a litter he was carried before his men to do battle with the Lord of the Isles. His ranks were broken, when a hand visible to the monarch alone, held the drink of life to his lip ; he tasted it ; he sprang from his litter, and wan the day. To win the blessed cup which contains the drink of life art thou come ; hast thou courage for the adventure ? ”

The looks of Sir James brightened up as a summer morning. “ I thank thee, Sir Michael,” he exclaimed ; “ this adventure is according to my own spirit. To achieve the blessed cup I shall do all that a good knight can ; and having my own firmness to trust in, I can better promise success than when I have to go to work with the strength and the dispositions of others. Of this cup I have heard. Romance and tradition unite in saying that the fairies have the power of fashioning such a cup once every year, on the blessed eve

which gave the new spirit of salvation to earth. It is also said that souls of evil men seek to seize it, that they may drink and be happy; and that evil spirits long for it, that they may drink and sooth their torments.” “Thou hast heard truly,” answered Sir Michael, “so go forth and win it by thy courage and by thy wit: now is the time that the treasure is to be obtained. Thou seest not yet all thou hast to contend with; I shall go with thee, and make all thine enemies visible. I say to thee, fear nothing from shapes of earth, or air, or sky, but seize the blessed cup, and let it not go.”

They dismounted from their palfreys, and advanced to the druid circle of stones, and stood and looked on the meeting. The virgin queen sat in the middle; she had thrown back her transparent veil from her face, and held the blessed cup, overbrimming with divine liquor, in her hand. “See,” she said, in a voice so melodious that its words seemed uttered in music, “see the blessed cup; a touch of its brim, and a taste of its immortal liquid, gives strength to the weak, youth to the aged, beauty to the unlovesome, and life to him gasping at his last gasp. With this cup I have wandered invisibly amongst the homes of men. To the sick and faded child have I restored health and beauty; to the good youth struck down on the battle-field have I given strength to rise again

and conquer; and to the maiden crazed and crossed with love have I given strength of heart and understanding. Thrice blessed is this cup therefore; and no wonder that the sons of men and the seed of darkness covet it, and wish to win it from my hand." All the fairies shouted, and sung a song in praise of the wondrous cup, till all the hill re-echoed.

THE BLESSED CUP.

I.

O wondrous cup! O wondrous cup!
 Made on that glorious night
 When rose the bright star in the east,
 And blest us with its light.
 O brighter than stars newly made,
 Or stream when morn is sunny;
 O sweeter than the smell of flowers,
 Or taste of dropping honey.
 The trees shall cease to shoot in spring,
 The summer sun cease glowing,
 And birds to sing, ere thou, blest cup,
 Shalt stay thy wondrous flowing.

II.

O wondrous cup! O wondrous cup!
 No marvel that we smile,
 And sing in joy of heart, and dance
 About this happy isle.
 The wounded hero feels thy might,
 And rises in his glory;

The fainting poet feels thy power
 Inspire his lovelorn story.
 The new-made mother tastes of thee,
 And smiles in matron gladness ;
 And woe and sorrow wets his lip,
 And charms his soul from sadness.

III.

O blessed cup ! more wondrous far
 Than ought beneath the sun,
 Thou often hast by man been sought,
 But never yet been won.
 For he who seeks thee must be brave
 And wise in knightly duty :
 Can rule the court, and rule the fight,
 And do devoir to beauty ;
 Must gentle be with gentleness,
 And with the bold be bolder,
 Else he may perish ere yon moon
 Has grown three moments older.

When the song ceased, the virgin leader of the fairies held up the cup in her hand, and said, “ It is, indeed, a marvellous vessel ; and well has the song said, that he must be wise and knightly who wins it. But I feel the presence of baptized feet. Ho ! look round, ye watchers, and tell me what manner of men they are who have the boldness to approach the fairy festival.” A score of feet, as light as the lark’s wing, put a girdle round the hill, looked on the shady side of every stone,

glanced into the boughs of every tree, turned every branch, and returning to the meeting, said, that nought of human flesh and blood was present, unless it were concealed under a blade of grass, or hidden in a hollow nut. “ Yet something human approaches,” said the queen; “ but let it come. We have braved the Douglas, the Percy, the Gordon, the Beaumont, and other knights of name, and we break not up our festival for aught born of woman.”

“ I marvel,” said Sir James, in a whisper, “ that these dark-eyed elves did not see us. Shall I go and win the blessed cup? And yet, where so many noble knights have failed, can I hope to prosper?” “ The elves saw us,” said Sir Michael; “ didst thou not hear one of them say, as he stood looking upon us, ‘ The ten stones of Elfin hill! There are ten stones no longer—I count twelve.’ The time is nigh, advance when I hold out my hand.” Sir Michael stood, and looked steadfastly on the moon; she grew paler and paler; the stars began to be blotted from the sky, and a dark misty cloud descended on the summit of the hill. “ James,” he said, “ be nothing daunted, though one whom thou wottest not of opposes thee; let the shape which assails thee be what it will, rush on it with thy sword, and fear nothing.” Sir James trembled with anxiety

and ardour, and on seeing Sir Michael's rising hand he sprang forward, snatching out his sword as he flew.

Five hundred startled forms sprang to their feet as Sir James rushed through their ranks, and a cry arose, which roused the deer sleeping at a mile distant. He passed the inner circle, stood within arm's-length of the queen, held out his hand, and said, " Fair creature, whom man cannot see and not love, I come for the blessed cup. Give it of thy own free will ; constrain me not to use force with a thing so sweet and so fair ; with the gentle shall I be gentle ; with the rude alone am I rude ; and with the bold, bolder." " Mortal," replied the queen, " it is to be taken, not given : put forth thy hand, and see whether it be thy fortune to have it or no." Sir James held out his hand, but in a moment a Shape glided in between them, dark, threatening, and large, covered with sable steel from head to foot, and a blade in its hand, which appeared burning, as if with fire. Sir James gazed for a moment upon the phantom, and a chill came over his frame, for he beheld the form of the third James, such as he was when, overcome in battle by his son and his nobles, he retired, wounded and covered with dust from the field, to die by the swords of traitors.

'The phantom shook his sword over the knight's

head with one hand, and motioned him away with the other. Sir James remembered the words of Sir Michael, and saying, “ False shape begone,” plunged his charmed sword through the shadowy form, rushed on, without encountering any obstruction, and seizing the blessed cup with his left hand, turned round to maintain his prize with his right. No phantom or shape was there; he looked at the blade—it was stained from hilt to point, as if he had passed it through the steaming exhalation of a cauldron of pitch. He looked round: five hundred forms were on their feet, five hundred bridles were shining in their hands, while a dark cloud rolled away from the hill, and in the cloud he saw the rudiments of the form which had opposed him.

The virgin queen stood before him; the sweetness of her tongue, the loveliness of her face, and the graceful proportions of her person, took away all those notions of want of dignity, which we are apt to associate with those cast in the smaller mould of nature. The veil which before covered her person, and floated on the grass beside her, was removed, and from her eyes there came such light, and from her lips such music, that Sir James stood like one entranced, the cup sparkling in one hand, and his sword bared in the other.

“ Mortal, thou art welcome,” she said, “ to our

immemorial hill ; thy boldness we forgive, thy discretion we praise, and thy valour we admire. Thou hast come in the good hour, done the good deed, and thou hast our praise and our thanks. The shape which thou hast vanquished is one with which we hold frequent war, an evil shape, which hath long sought to turn the good we do mankind into ill, and who lives where we wish not to enter, in a place dark, frightful, and accursed. To thee, therefore, the blessed cup we gladly surrender ; go—use it for the good and the happiness of mankind. From thee it will keep off old age and feebleness ; and through the virtuous use thou makest of it, thou mayest hope for bliss hereafter. Fairies, let us depart.” At once the sound, as of the rising of a thousand wild swans on the wing, was heard ; then the rushing, as of a flock of lambs, when the sward is green, the sun is hot, and they are full of milk and mirth ; and then a wild strain of music was breathed over the hill, the meteor pennon became agitated, and the whole meeting vanished.

“ Sir James,” said Sir Michael, “ thou hast behaved thyself well and worthily in this adventure of the blessed cup ; hold fast the immortal treasure, trust it not in mean and undeserving hands, but keep it ever about thee, so that misfortune may not befall thee, nor thine enemies succeed to

thy harm. Through its aid shall we pass into a sacred and happy land, where woe is unknown, where sadness never comes, and where mortal men are never seen, save those who are favoured by the beautiful and happy people. Follow me, and see that fear comes not upon you : I have been the way before, and every path is familiar ; many have tried, but few succeeded.” They went to the centre of the druid circle, where the grass was of a livelier green, and a tenderer verdure, marked the spot so truly round as if it had been struck by an instrument. “Behold,” said Sir Michael, “the door of the way to the land of which I spake ; knock, and see if it will be opened.” So saying, with the shaft of his short lance he struck the ground thrice, then spilt wine from the fairy cup upon the spot ; the flowers sprung richer, and the grass greener ; then looking on the moon, he said, “Blessed planet, when thy brightness passes behind the cloud, this way shall be opened ; for sun, nor moon, nor star, must never behold it.”

CHAPTER VI.

Scho ledde hym in at Eldene hill,
Vnder nethe a derne lee;
Whare it was derk as mydnyght myrke,
And euer the water till his knee.

THOMAS OF ERSSELDOUNE.

A CLOUD, in colour a silver gray, rose suddenly in the east, and, climbing the sky with the rapidity of an ascending dove, darkened the moon for a minute's space or more, and threw a shadow upon the hill, while all the valley below glowed in unchequered light. “Gather your mantle close, James,” said Sir Michael, “clasp your hands over your bosom, utter not one word, and follow me.” Sir James did as he was desired; and as he stood, prepared, a wild light glimmered around him, and a star shooting athwart the clouded moon descended and seemed to fall on the sod at his feet. Blinded by this sudden effulgence, and shaking for a moment in every limb, he felt his companion pluck him by the sleeve, heard him say, “Time is;” and he had followed him several paces before light was restored to his eyes; he looked, and the

whole scene was changed. He saw neither moon, nor stars, nor hill, nor green valley; but a dark and narrow way which resembled a twilight grove when the wood is in thick leaf, the dews begin to drop, and the stars to twinkle. His companion walked silently before him with a slow, rather than a careful step, nor looked to the right nor to the left. The way became narrower; the hard ribbed rocks hung down on each side like the boughs of a forest frozen into stone, and the sound of water scarcely rose on his ear, till he found himself mid-leg deep in a running stream.

“Put down your hand,” said Sir Michael, “and with your palm taste of this delicious water.” The knight did so, and said, “This is divine; what blessed region does it flow from? How exquisite must all its productions be, if they correspond with this.” “You shall soon prove them,” replied, Sir Michael; “the region to which this stream belongs is now at hand, and your courage on the fairy hill to night has entitled you to behold it, and to speak with its people.” All at once the narrow and gloomy path terminated; darkness was chased from the air; the stream expanding into a deep and beautiful river flowed away to their right hand, while along its bank a path, spangled with flowers and moist with dew, led to lofty groves and verdant fields; to a land of towers, palaces, and

gardens. Over head there hung what seemed a firmament of polished glass, in which stream, and tower, and tree, lay distinctly pictured, and the light which played along its surface was the offspring of a little river, which, glowing between its banks like a torrent of quicksilver, illuminated all the space from earth to sky.

As Sir James stood with his right hand above his eyes, contemplating this splendid region, where he saw neither bird, nor beast, nor creeping thing, there came a man to his side, who laid his hand on his, and said, “Welcome, welcome to this happy land; here no stern king, no haughty counsellor, nor savage noble, can oppress, insult, and condemn. Here the ambitious cannot come with his ambition; the haughty with his haughtiness, nor the blood-thirsty with his desire of blood. Welcome to a land which deserves my love more than my native Scotland, but cannot be my native land to me.” Sir James turned round, and gazed in the speaker’s face; a face in the bloom of youth, with tresses of a raven hue, curling closely on the temples and neck, and a mild but martial fire sparkling in his eyes. “Knight of Hoddam,” exclaimed Sir James, “did I not behold, on the field of Flodden, thy banner trodden beneath the feet of Lord Dacre’s chivalry, and thy Annandale warriors bearing thy dead body away on their bloody

shields. But it cannot be Sir Patrick Johnstone ; a phantom like my friend has arisen to deceive me, though aught is welcome that comes in a brave man's shape.

"Thy praise," answered the other, "makes the memory of that bloody contest dear to my heart. I was indeed stricken sorely ; but I was not then doomed to die. How fared it with our gallant host ? I saw not the close, but I can guess it to have been disastrous ; few of my gallant spears would return to the bonnie banks of Annan, and to the pasture hills of Corrie and Hoddam." "Few, few of thy gallant men will ever drink of the pure Annan again. They crowded around the place where their unworthy monarch fought ; and freely gave their bodies to protect him from destruction." The Knight of Hoddam wrung his hands and exclaimed "They laid me down at the foot of Lady Eleanor's cross, in the sleep, as they thought, of death, and returned to avenge me and die. When shall I lead such a lusty plump of spears again ; and when shall the hills of Dumfrieshire ring to the sound of my war cry ?"

Sir James would have replied, but there came to him a man advanced in years with a stately form and a noble mien ; his long gray hair fell on his shoulders, and grave deliberation, and sedate thought, were written on his broad brow. Sir James hid

his face with his hands when he beheld him, and turned his head away. “Turn not from me,” said the stranger, “but let me cheer myself with a sight of thy face; to thee I ascribe not the woes which overwhelmed me; to thee I impute not the sentence which gave my gray hairs to the headsman’s axe; it was the will of God that my pride in mine own wisdom and power should be humbled to the dust. Look on me therefore; I know not when mine aged eyes will be cheered again with the sight of him whom I was born to love and obey.” “Lord of Douglas,” said Sir James, “thou hast a noble spirit, and I may well exclaim with our favourite minstrel, ‘O Douglas, Douglas, tender and true!’” He held out his hand, and found it wet with tears, and strained in the friendly clasp of one who had been condemned unjustly.

“O that Sir Adam Herries but saw thee,” said the Douglas; “he was with me in the grove but now, and our talk was of thee and of Scotland.” Sir Adam appeared as he spoke, and advancing to Sir James said, “a faithful servant to a faithless land is before thee; one who thought and toiled and endured much by sea and shore for his king and his country. But the nobles were too proud, and their king too unyielding for the poor man to have peace; civil wars, and desire of shedding blood chased him from the shore, and when he

sailed the sea, the royal navy of England came to sink him in the firth. Alas ! alas ! for Scotland ; its king seldom lives to man's estate ; the English sword and the assassin's dagger lie in wait for him, and a brief reign and a bloody grave seem ordained to our monarchs." He turned aside, and walked mournfully away. As Sir James gazed after him, he heard the soft music of a cittern, which played one of his native airs, sweet, wild, and tender ; he started, for he knew the hand that touched the instrument, and turning about, the minstrel of Glenroole stood before him, his cittern in his hand, and a mantle of the richest green velvet fastened on his bosom with hooks of gold.

"Alas !" said Sir James, "and am I doomed to-day to meet only with those whom I have wronged and injured ; banished, and driven to exile and death. To thee, sweet minstrel, I owe a deep atonement ; I branded thy lofty art with an unworthy name ; I ranked its professors with the mean and the sordid ; I punished them with fine, imprisonment, banishment, and death ; and when thou hadst the courage to resent the wrong in verses doomed to live, recording my shame and thine own glory, I crowned thee with laurel as a good poet, and scourged thee with rods as an evil subject. Yet I have heard that thou didst forgive me, and sung one of thine own romantic songs in

my praise." The minstrel made no reply, but playing an air melting and mournful, he added his own sweet and impassioned voice to the music, and sang a song of which tradition has supplied but the following imperfect and corrupted copy :

THE SONG OF GLENROOLE.

I.

The winter wind sang in the tree,
Like iron the frozen ground
Rang to my step, the snow flake fell,
And grim night wrapt me round.
And grim night wrapt me round about,
The wild beast had his lair ;
The fowl its perch—no home had I
To hap my hoary hair.

II.

I 've harped to nobles high and haught,
To warriors fierce and rude,
To shepherds on the mountain brown,
And queens' in Holyrood.
To kings too in high Holyrood,
The melting strings I 've swept,
Till earls and monarchs eyes grew moist,
And ladies more than wept.

III.

The hour of sorrow came, and now,
Far, far from Scottish ground,
I touch the thrilling string, and lend
Inspired speech to sound.

With Nith's green holms, and Yarrow vales,
Full loth was I to part—
In this sweet land my body lives,
But Scotland holds my heart.

The minstrel ceased, but the air seemed still filled with the music and the poetry of his song, and Sir James imagined that invisible hands and tongues were eking out the strain of his once favoured bard. “Minstrel,” said Sir James, “I love thee for the mildness of thy nature, and for the gentleness of thy song. Few have suffered so much as thou, yet with what meekness thy sorrow has been borne. To thee was given a power far sharper than the sharpest sword, yet thou hast not used the all-mighty weapon against those who did thee wrong. The sword smites, the clay falls, and all is silence for ever, but he whose crimes stand recorded in imperishable poetry, for his name there is no oblivion. I thank thee, Minstrel, for thy mildness and thy mercy.” The poet strove to speak, but the rapture of his heart choked his utterance, and he was glad when a strain of music of a lighter and milder nature than his own attracted all ears, and made Sir James turn towards the east, whence the sound came.

Sir Michael stood beside his companion and said, “Mark what I do, here comes the ruler of this country in the midst of all her chivalry. This

is the land where the distaff and the spindle are sceptres; here the harp does the deeds of the trumpet, and the light of a lady's looks the actions of wisdom and valour. The sword has no edge, the spear is shivered, and the flight of the arrows is as harmless as the fall of thistle-down." Sir James looked, but though the minstrelsy approached, and increased in sweetness, he saw nothing but the beautiful land, and the forms of those to whom he had just spoken.

The ground appeared to be cleft asunder, and out of the chasm there gushed light, and following the light came a lady on a white palfrey, clad in a robe of sea-green silk, jewelled from knee to hem, while the dark and waving abundance of her tresses was confined so slightly by a snood of pearls, that they gushed in an armful over her ivory shoulder, and danced to the motion of her palfrey. The heart of Sir James leaped to his lips, his frame shook, and he said, while his tongue quivered with emotion, "I have seen that lovely face before, and to those dark eyes my heart did homage when it was guiltless and free." "Be silent," said Sir Michael; "the loves of earth come not into this land any more than its sorrows, and that beauteous form which inspired poet's verses, and won the heart of monarchs, must be looked upon here with meekness and awe."

Ere he had done speaking, the lady, followed by a long line of youths and maidens, swept suddenly by, but not without casting on Sir James one of those sweet and subduing glances which he had never before experienced, and only imagined them confined to the reveries of romancers. “It is Grace Gordon, whose eyes are so bright, and whose smile is so sweet, and whose form is so faultless. “I shall speak to her,” said Sir James, “though all created forms had vowed the contrary.” “O, go, cast thyself at her feet,” said Sir Michael; “shed tears of delight; utter vows while language can express them; she will receive thee mildly and tenderly; lo, and behold, she invites thee to the interview—look there.” Sir James looked, and the blood rushed to his brow, for where his companion pointed, he saw what seemed a well-known vale, a rivulet murmured between its banks of broom; wild swans swam in a pool breast deep, and grazed on the margin; wild bees swarmed on the full blossomed flowers; the lark called from above, the thrush answered from below, and the form of Grace Gordon was seen gliding among the broom, glancing at every third step over her white shoulder, to see if her lover followed.

Sir Michael stayed Sir James with his hand, and said, “Fool, fool, fool, that land seems the native land of all who look upon it, and that form glid-

ing there seems the first love of every beholder. To thee she comes clothed in youth, and grace, and beauty, stamped with the image of her who won thy youthful heart, and to me she appears full of staid, austere matron dignity, the image of the blessed wife of my bosom. It is this delusion which renders this region so enchanting; but thou art come here to see with undeluded eyes; thou wilt behold matters worthy of thy wonder, and learn that God, through all his vast creation, has made nothing which forms not a scale to measure his might and his glory by. Thou wilt see that forms which the wise call creations of the fancy, and shapes of superstition, are living things working out his wondrous designs, and forming part of that vast chain of being, intellect, and spirit, of which one end is in heaven, the other in hell, and to which man is the centre. Let us go; seest thou these towers glittering before us; there we shall find the heroine of this happy land seated amid her chivalry."

They went, and entered a palace with a hundred pillars, which reached from the earth to the glowing sky above; Sir James wondered at their loftiness and beauty. They seemed of hollow crystal, and each in its centre contained wondrous things without end. In one a large serpent, covered with dark golden spots, and whose colour

changed as he moved, twined round and round in continual motion, while a fire imprisoned along with it showed its changing hues. In another column streamed a light, and in the light rose flights of fowl, and hawks pursuing them; still the one flew and the other followed, and their flight seemed without end. In a third a stream of pure water flowed upward, and in the water sported all kinds of fish, darting here and there, shewing at every turn their silvery scales, and their sides spotted with crimson drops. In a fourth a dark form seemed imprisoned, Sir James turned away in fear from its writhing body and flashing eyes. In a fifth he beheld, like a spider preserved in amber, one of those half human half brute forms, which the heathens of old worshipped under the name of Pan; he strove to break through his prison wall, and several sylph-like forms, as they glided rapidly past, smiled in turn at the imprisoned monster. Sir Michael led him away saying, “The human form thou seest in the sixth column is one who was a prince on earth, and who came into this land as thou comest now; for he was brave and forward, and his form was little less than divine. But he brought the evil passions of earth with him, and the pure resented his impure words, and took him and confined him in that hollow prison

as a warning to all who come in an unsubdued spirit.

They had now reached the centre of the palace, and found it crowded with young and beautiful forms. The queen sat upon a throne of green jasper; she wore a chaplet of dewy flowers; held a small rod of silver in her hand, her form was noble, and her look majestic and serene. Sir James knelt before her; she motioned him to rise, and said, “Mortal, I bid thee welcome to Fairy-land. Since the first daisy blossomed to the sun, and since the first blade of grass bore dew, have we sojourned on earth, or found an abode within its wondrous bosom. To us the Creator gave the power of making earth render up her beauty and strength; we wooed flowers from the ground; gave their delicious loads to the fruit-tree; the bud to the bee, and the berry to the bush; filled the brown nut with its kernel, and in the horn of the honey-suckle we poured nectar and dew. We found the cow wild in the wood, and the sheep on the hill, and the horse running in useless and untamed strength. We led them to green pastures, made the ground yield for their sustenance the richest herbs, and we watched them and preserved them from the ravening beasts of prey, and from disease and the plague of the cattle. We found man a wild savage in the wood, with his club

and his dog, and his naked progeny. We taught him how to bend the bow on the fallow deer ; how to make a prey of the fowls of the air and the fish of the sea. From us he learned the art of clothing his body, and of nourishing it with corn, ground, kneaded, and baked ; we reared a house to shield him from summer's warmth and winter's cold ; we taught him how to preserve food ; the virtue of herbs ; the signs of heaven, and the names of the stars. From us he learned the little wisdom of which he boasts ; and to his fair companion we taught mildness, meekness, domestic duty, and obedience.

“ I tell thee all this mortal creature, because there are men on earth who teach you to despise us ; to think of us only as the idle progeny of a superstitious imagination, or the allies of the spirit too evil to be named. Alas ! and have we improved the earth and man’s condition for this ? But man has insulted us no more than he has injured himself ; when earth was ours, and the fullness thereof, how different was it from what it is now. The streams were full of fish ; the air filled with the fowls of heaven ; the earth swarming with the tame beasts of the field ; the woods were full of fruit, and green earth shot up in strength and abundance, all that was necessary for man’s comfort and joy. Then were our voices heard,

and our faces seen among the sons of men; the sound of our sweet instruments, and the song of our divine poets gladdened their fire-sides; we assuaged the rigour of the mother's birth pang; brought her blooming again to the fields, and made her beauty grow up in her daughters, and the looks of him whom she loved in her sons. But soon, alas! a disastrous change was wrought. Men grew weary of health and happiness, and thirsted after strange knowledge, strange dresses, strange drink, and strange food. The pastoral abundance of the land was not enough; the hills and dales were shorn of their woods, and the flowers have severed the green bosom of the ground, and man ate his bread with the sweat on his brow. A poisonous mixture was laid on the earth to warm it into unnatural life, and the pampered ear of barley and wheat sprung up in place of the sweet herb and the apple; the clustering nut, and the powdery plum. Enclosures followed; one man said, lo! this land is mine; one seized the vale, another seized the hill; they raised landmarks, and what God had given to all was taken by a few. Then towns and castles were built; kingdoms were made, princes reigned, oppression grew strong, slavery followed, and one half of mankind became beasts, bridled and saddled, and the other half, booted and spurred to ride them. Our

ministration was mocked; for we loved not the tow-
ered city and the long array of princes and proud
ones. We tore no trees from the fair river bank,
and hewed them, and fashioned them into ships, to
sail the ocean-stream, and do deeds of evil. For us,
no oxen dragged the galling plough; for us no man
was doomed to slavery in the centre of the earth
searching out seams of gold or silver. For us no
landmark was reared; nor were the feet of men
fettered from nature's balmy range. Man did all
these evil deeds for himself, and soon he ate of the
bitter fruit. Mortal, thou knowest what a bloody
field is, where thy kindred and thy people lie cut
down like grass; thou knowest what it is to spur
thy war-horse over the bodies of the dead and
dying, and thou knowest how sad defeat and cap-
tivity is, so of war shall I not speak, for blood dis-
pleaseth me deeply, and over a battle field our pure
feet cannot go till it is cleansed by the rains of
heaven, and sweetened by the balmy wind."

The queen rose, and as she rose the richest
odours were diffused over the palace; the pillars
which supported the lofty roof glowed like melted
gold, and from the walls an increase of splendour
came, which made the light from above too brilliant
for mortal eyes. All around sat rank succeeding
rank; young and beautiful forms, with long
hair, and green mantles, and looks staid and meek.

Ten thousand harps, citterns, dulcimers, and lutes, hung round the walls; and the night wind, which touched the strings, raised a low and scarcely audible music, extremely sweet and touching.

“Mortal,” said the queen to Sir James, “I have told thee how we wrought for man, and how he has rewarded us; listen, for the tale is still worthy of thy ear. We retired from the presence of man, and frail are abodes in the darksome wood and lonesome hill; but man, and his inventions, and his crimes, and his woes, followed us. The plough disturbed our pastoral abodes; the feller’s axe frequented our silent woods, and cut down the oaks under which we had danced for a thousand years, and war, and spilt blood, and the groan of oppression, came and disturbed our daily joy. Then we sought our homes in the bosom of the earth, and only returned to its sorrowful surface at times to wander on the mountain heads, on lonesome burn banks, and in secluded glens, looking on the land we loved, and where we had dwelt in happiness and joy. On our favourite haunt didst thou approach us last night, and thy courage won the blessed cup which gives strength to the frame, and wisdom to the heart. Come hither, and I shall show thee the wonders of this place, for thine eyes are too dim and gross to see with clearness and truth.”

Sir James stood beside her, and she took a green leaf from a small box of ivory and gold, and touched his eyelids, and said, "Now look and see what thou canst see." Sir James looked, and the forms of the mighty, the wise, the brave, and the good stood before him; men who kept our counselled thrones; priests simple hearted and pious; counsellors without arrogance; generals without cruelty; poets without vanity; and women who were lovely, and yet knew it not. Men who had fallen in a bloody field, or perished for faith or freedom's sake, were there; and their numbers he could not count.

"Listen," said the queen, "and learn how we work for the good of men. From the battle field we hear of the youth wounded to death, and by our skill we stay the spirit from passing; we restore him in strength; and bear him to our blessed abodes. We hearken the shepherd's perishing cry amid the snow, and he that is pure and innocent we snatch from death, and breathe the breath of life again through his nostrils, and cheer him among our vales and woods. We have unbound the martyr from the stake when the flames rose high, and removed the patriot from the scaffold, even as the bloody axe fell through the air: but we love little children most. We compassionate the weak and sickly infant, and we bear

it from the mother's bosom to be nourished upon milk which can waken a staff into vegetation, and create a man out of a child between sunset and sunrise. Therefore let not the mothers weep for the loss of their sweet children; why should the innocent and beautiful go to the green churchyard, when we have a place where they are renovated in life and loveliness, and where they will remain till the earth dissolves away, and the kingdom of glory is opened."

Sir James gazed around him, and he beheld many whom he knew, and there came one from his seat and gazed upon him; an ancient man with gray locks, his face glowed, his eye sparkled, and he said, "I preached the truth to benighted Scotland; I revealed God's word to the unenlightened people; I held out his blessed volume, wherein it is written, he that runs may read; and I said, sons of men, ye shall know the words of the most High from his own lips, and I read, and all the people marvelled exceedingly, and cried out with a loud voice, man hath found out many inventions. But the worshippers of wood and stone; the sellers of salvation for money; the men who believe that the bread they bake, and the wine they press from the grape, are flesh and blood, even when between their lips; lo! they gathered around me, and cried, 'heresy,' and I was taken

and tied to the stake; the faggots were heaped; the torch was applied; the red flame rushed round me; but the servant of the truth was saved: woe, woe, to Scotland, and to England, if they shut their ears, harden their hearts, and refuse what God's holy law reveals. I am the first who suffered for the truth in Scotland."

And there stood a man with his hand upon the frame of his harp; his graye and venerable brow was turned upwards, and the strings, along which his fingers wandered, emitted music; for what other response could they make to the torch of Thomas Ercledoune. "Behold," said the queen, "one of the inspired spirits of old; who passed not through the grave to our land; who sunk not in the sea; fell in no battle; and was not doomed to the stake, nor sentenced to the scaffold; but from our love for his divine minstrelsy was he carried hither. Fragments of his noble verses are still remembered among the sons of men. But believe not in that audacious legend which levels us to his love, and gives to Huntly-bank the glory of being the scene where our affection was lavished on a mortal creature. Our love for True Thomas is of an holier kind, and seeks not the green bough and the cloud of night." The Bard of Ercledoune, as she spoke, touched his harp, and the words flowed from his lips, and the music from the

strings, with the same natural freedom that the sun shines and that water runs.

THOMAS OF ERCLEDOUNE'S SONG.

I.

The sun sank down as I went forth
By Huntly-bank alone,
There was no sound in the wide earth,
I mused, and made my moan.
The grass was sown with glittering dew,
The moon rose from the sea,
And with her light a lady bright
Came through the flowers to me.

II.

O'er her white neck her clustering locks
Fell down in golden showers ;
Her foot sent music from the ground,
And fragrance from the flowers.
Her kirtle, all of sea-green silk,
Shone jewelled to the knee ;
And, shedding back each golden lock,
She stood, and looked on me.

III.

She looked on me, for she was far
Too fair to look upon ;
A radiance such as morning sheds
Streamed from her locks alone.
Streamed from her locks alone, her speech,
Like music, flowed out free ;
But mortal words can ne'er express
The words she spoke to me.

IV.

Farewell, she said, sweet Huntly-bank,

Beneath thy fair festoons,

By flowing stream and greenwood tree,

I've smiled ten thousand moons.

Farewell, ye nooks, where foxgloves bloomed,

And spring's first gowans grew,

No more o'er you my dancing feet

Shall shake the scented dew.

V.

Farewell, wild hill and mountain green,

The glen where waters meet,

Your sward no more shall show the marks

Of unpolluted feet.

Your trees may bud to shade the bird,

Your blooms to feed the bee,

Your streams may flow to quench men's thirst,

But not to gladden me.

VI.

True Thomas rise, and take thy harp,

And touch its tenderest string,

And make a song on Huntly-bank

Which maid's shall weep to sing :

For here no more I'll charm thy heart,

Or wake thy soul in flame.

She gazed, she sighed, she turned away,

And vanished as she came.

"Mortal," said the queen, "the songs which we inspire are of the purest kind, and to our green and happy land spirits warmed with poesie are allowed to retire: for here they have the peace

which they found not on earth ; nor are their ears shut to the praise of the world ; the admiration of the good and the wise is the highest meed they can receive. Seest thou yon dark-eyed youth, leaning over a dulcimer ? from his lips have flowed many a sweet and moving ditty ; the songs which gladden the good man's heart, which make the maiden smile in joy, as she combs the wool, or presses the curd, are his. Of domestic joy, of household rule, of wedded love, and devout feelings, have his songs been ; nor did he forget social pleasure, the warrior's daring, nor the patriot's toil : listen, for he is about to sing ; hearken, it is no strain of joy."

He chaunted, rather than sung, the following verses, but the richness of his voice, and the natural art of his manner, made his chaunting equal to the finest singing :

SHE'S GONE TO DWELL IN HEAVEN.

I.

She's gone to dwell in heaven, my lassie,
She's gone to dwell in heaven ;
Ye're o'er pure quoth the voice of God,
For dwelling out of heaven.

II.

What will she do in heaven, my lassie,
What will she do in heaven ;

With angels songs she 'll mix her thoughts,
And make them meet for heaven.

III.

She was beloved by a', my las ie,
She was belov'd by a';
But an angel fell in love with her,
And took her from us a'.

IV.

Fu' lowly now she lies, my lassie,
Fu' lowly now she lies;
A lovelier form ne'er went to the earth,
Nor from it will arise.

V.

Fu' soon I 'll follow thee, my lassie,
Fu' soon I 'll follow thee ;
There 's nought on earth for me to love,
And nought to glad mine ee.

VI.

I looked in thy lovely face, my lassie,
I looked in thy lovely face ;
Thou seem'dst a lily new cut i' the bud,
And fading in its place.

VII.

I looked in thy death-closed eye, my lassie,
I looked in thy death-closed eye ;
A lovelier light in the brow of heaven,
Time never will destroy.

VIII.

Thy lips were rosie and calm, my lassie,
Thy lips were rosie and calm,
But gone was the holy breath to heaven,
That sang the evening psalm.

IX.

Where'er thou art I 'm thine, my lassie,
Where'er thou art I 'm thine ;
My heart is with thee where thou dwell'st,
There 's no place so divine.

The poet ceased, and the queen said, “I love the song which fills my soul with sadness. Mortal man, farewell ! there is much ordained for thee to do, before thou art fit to be admitted into the company of the unpolluted. Go and fulfil thy destiny. What thou hast witnessed here will preach to thy soul the necessity of truth, purity, singleness of heart, and generosity of nature.” She went away when she had done speaking, and Sir Michael and Sir James returned by the way which they came.

CHAPTER VII.

All shall be thine, yon moon shines on
And all that sea encloses ;
From wild Siberia's sunless snows,
To Syria with her roses.

“ I know not,” said Sir James, “ where the region of Fairyland ends, and where earth begins. To me the hill on which we now stand, the wild wood waving before us, the slender stream trickling below us, yon silent and glittering city ; these enclosed gardens and cultivated fields; all cry “earth, earth,” to my heart, and tell me that I am among the sons of men, and in a world which men can enjoy.” “ Aye,” answered Sir Michael, “ so indeed it seems : see the flocks of the shepherd sleeping on the hills, their fleeces wet with dew, and the brown fox looking down from the rock singling out his victim. See yon aged and feeble woman ; she kneels and prays that her youngest son may return from the Scottish wars, and comfort her declining years. And behold the moon, she sets one bright horn over the hill top ; her increasing splendour streams down the greenwood, and now she is fairly risen into the blue sky, and the com-

pany of all her stars. It seems the earth indeed, and fresh and lovely it looks."

"To me," said Sir James, "earth is a sweet place, and this body is made for its enjoyment; this gross and mortal frame which faints in the heat, pines in the cold, and is sensible of pain from disease or the sword, is unfit for a happier region. Of earth itself, its enjoyments are of earth, and I would rather be lord of a little tower, a solitary field, a good sword, and a sweet wife, than king over an hundred palaces filled with the damsels and bards, and harpers of fairy land."

"Thy feelings are of the world, where thy body is made," replied Sir Michael, "and man is created as much for the enjoyment of earth and all it contains, as a dial is made for its latitude, which will tell the hour in no other place. The pure air of heaven breathes for more ethereal creations than man. Before we part, another heart will be given unto you, and you will perceive that all is worthless below but virtue. Come, let us go on our way along this pleasant ground, whether it be the green earth or not."

The land in which they walked was indeed green and lovely. The ploughshare and the shepherd's staff seemed to share the hill and vale between them, and green natural woods of ancient growth claimed their part of the soil, while a slender

stream, half seen, half hid, among the drooping boughs, glided away, and gleamed in the new risen moon. .. The gray summit of some war-worn tower, was visible over the groves as they went; the stray deer looked at them for a moment, and started down the glade, and hares and rabbits swarmed among the evening herbs and flowers, as thickly as bees in the mid-day sun. “Earth, earth,” said Sir James, plucking an apple and tasting it; “all this is of earth, and neither fairy charms nor the imagination of man have any share in the sweet fruits of the tree.”

They had now entered a little narrow valley, the sides clothed with trees, the ground painted with flowers, nor had the hand and foot of man touched a shrub, nor trodden on a flower. They heard the soft dropping of water amid the stillness of the night, and from a rock hung with flowers they saw a springlet throwing a line of liquid silver, the thickness of a straw, into a little carved font, while beside it sat an aged warrior, his helmet placed on the ground, his gray head glittering in the moon, and a small ivory goblet in his hand, slaking his thirst from the spring. He looked up, shed back his hair from his brow, and admitted the dewy refreshment of the evening air, to temples long pressed by a steel helmet, and a face which was scarred with the strokes of battle. An old and

wasted oak, stricken by lightning, grew, or rather stood behind him, and on its naked summit a raven sat, looking eagerly down, turning first one eye and then another upon the warrior below, and uttering a suspicious croak, like crows when they smell gunpowder.

The old man smoothed down his gray hair with his hand, took a crust of coarse bread, and eat and drank with all the quiet enjoyment of a veteran. He looked neither to the right nor left, but fixed his eye upon a mouse in the grass, which, allured from its hole by the smell of bread, appeared uncertain whether to venture closer to the warrior or no. He smiled with eye, and he smiled with lip, uttered a low chirruping cry of invitation, strewed bread on the grass, and on the side of the little spring, where, amid the pure margin sand, the light foot of many a bird was marked. He lifted up his eyes, and their sparkle when he beheld Sir James and his companion, scared away the little timid tenant of the flower knot and the stubble field.

Sir James was struck with the noble air of the warrior, and looked on his stately form and swarthy face with an eye which read the story of many a deadly breach and bloody field. "Sir Warrior," he said, "it is late, the place is lonely, you are old, you seem weary, and may have far to go;

what can I do for you, in honour of these ancient hairs, and these scars of battle." "Alas! young warrior," answered the veteran gravely, "unless you can give me my youth and my strength again, you can serve me but little; the gray hairs which you reverence grew not so in our island wars, and the marks of battle which you see were inflicted by a hand more terrible than that of living man. A little way I can wend now without resting; yet in battle, when my blood is chafed, and my adversary before me, I can do deeds worthy of a younger warrior."

"I believe thee, with all my heart," replied Sir James; "thy strong frame, and thy war-worn helmet, heavier than ever pressed my brow, proclaim thee unsubdued in fight; and thy good sword there, where it lies, has doubtless witnessed many a martial deed, and unhorsed many a gallant soldier. How short, how thin, and how sharp it is; and what characters are these imprinted on the blade?" "Sir Knight," said the old man, "I would not have you to measure my actions by the length of my sword. The blade in an ordinary hand would work no heroic work; but, in other days, when this arm wielded it — of my own deeds it becomes me not to speak, and when the grave gapes flesh and blood should silence its boasting."

Sir Michael stood a little apart, downlooking

and silent, with his mantle folded about him, and held up to his mouth, like one fearful of the night air ; at a little distance stood his page Brunelfin, and so still did he stand, that he might have been numbered among the inanimate stones of the valley by any eye less discerning than his master's ; the look which they interchanged was that of mutual intelligence ; and the page, with his hands folded over his breast, stood and looked on the old man with a glance more of loathing than of love. Sir James regarded only the figure before him, and regarded him too with an interest which appeared every moment to augment.

"Sir Warrior," said he, "you have fought in foreign lands, and doubtless you have seen much of the various modes by which expert soldiers lead on the strength of their country to battle. One wild nation banded against another : Turk against Christian, and Arab against all. A man who has seen so much ought not to be silent, when his words are at once history and instruction."

"Such knowledge would avail thee little, my son," said the old warrior ; "the foe with whom I fought I can never meet again ; and our mode of warfare, fierce and terrible as it was, will never more be waged ; yet something would I willingly teach thee. Thou didst even now smile at my little sword. Now, if thou wouldest wish to see the

Saracen mode of warring with swords of Damascus steel, pull out thy blade, it is longer and broader than mine, and exchange with me three strokes, and do thy best."

Secretly did Sir Michael smile to himself, as he beheld Sir James bare his charmed sword, and confront the ancient warrior, who, starting from the ground with all the alacrity of youth, dealt his opponent a blow on the helmet, with such right good will that the solid steel was cleft asunder, and a drop of blood followed, trickling down his brow. A thrill ran through the frame of Sir James; he had given and received many a sharp stroke, and his own body had bled as well as those of his enemies, but never till now had he experienced the unnerving thrill, which made him for a moment weaker than an unweaned child. But his strength came back ere it was well taken away, and he returned the blow with such rapidity and earnestness, that the old warrior's sword was shorn asunder like a hazel-twig, and the severed blade flew into the water, and hissed like red-hot iron when quenched at the forge. "Mahoun!" exclaimed he, "who art thou? No blade formed by mortal hand could do such a deed; and look at my sword, many a good blow it has stricken, and cloven many a casque, but stroke will it strike never more." And he threw the hilt, with the fragment

of the blade, into the air, and it vanished, leaving a ray of light behind it like the train of a night meteor.

“Sir Warrior,” said Sir James, pleased with the superior merit of his own weapon, and scorning to resent a blow, though it had nearly cost him his life, “if that be all thou hast learned from the heathen, thy travels have been poorly repaid. Even Mahoun, in whose name thou didst revile thy little weapon, never forged a blade, amid the penal fires of the pit, which could sheer my Scottish blade in two.” “Scottish blade!” said the warrior, with a flushed brow, “such a sword was never made in Scottish land. There is a tradition in Syria, that the magician, Michael Scott, whom Mahoun confound, by the force of his spells, turned the second power on the infernal throne into a coal-black steed, and rode him over the desert till a thunderbolt struck him by the side of the Dead Sea. The magician took the molten bolt, still glowing with the heat of heaven, kindled a fire of spice with it in the desert, and from it fashioned a blade, which won for Sir William Wallace the fight of Stirling-bridge, and for Robert Bruce the field of Bannockburn; but it was lost on Flodden field; and an English hand will wield it now, and never more shall it gleam on a Stuart’s thigh. Sit down by me, and I will sing thee a

martial song, which I learned from a warrior in Palestine; it was made by an Arab bard of the desert, in honour of Michael's magic sword:

THE CHARMED SWORD.

I.

O charmed sword! thy steel was formed
When thunderbolts flew fast;
Thy blade was born mid fire from heaven,
And tempered in its blast.
Nought mortal may withstand thy stroke
Beneath the sun or moon;
No spell shall stay thy sheer descent,
Nor might of black Mahoun.
I see thee gleaming in the air,
Like God's avenging fire;
The fiercest hearts are struck with awe,
And tremble and retire.

II.

O charmed sword! O charmed sword!
Soon thy consuming gleam
Shall leave Assyria's scorching sands,
For Tweed or Teviot's stream:
To strike the tyrant in his strength,
And, with his chosen band,
Heap Stirling-field, and Roslin-ridge,
And Bannock's silver sand.
Then pause, and let thy bloody blade
Wave o'er the freeborn brow,
Till comes the hour of Trafalgar,
And day of Waterloo.

III.

O charmed sword ! O charmed sword !
I name thy name with awe,
Thy blade nought that is base may touch,
Nought that's unholy draw.
The tyrant ne'er shall have thy aid,
Thy blade no gold shall hire ;
Who hopes to bribe the thunderbolt,
Or wield eternal fire ?
Shine with the weak, and strike the strong,
And George, the ocean-lord,
Shall free with thee the world from chains—
Farewell, thou charmed sword !

" It is a rough bold song," said Sir James, " but how came you by all this knowledge ? It was not born with you, I imagine." " Sir Knight," answered the old warrior, " your surprise is natural, and I answer it thus. My time has not all been spent in unhorsing heroes, storming cities, and spilling blood. In the countries where I warred I made myself acquainted with the history of the people, with their wild beliefs, with their wisdom, their knowledge, whether of evil or of good. All this was to me a pleasure, and now I find it valuable. I have seen the Saracen minstrel charm a fish out of the stream with his harp-string and his rhyme. I have seen a matron in the north imprison a tempest in a vessel of stone, and dispose of it in the market to those she hated

for a fair and moderate breeze. I have seen an archer shoot a shaft in Syria, which slew an enemy in the Saracen camp in Spain. I have seen a warrior with his war-axe divide earth-fast flints, and bars of case-hardened steel. I have seen a charmed cup, which the thirst of a whole camp could never drain dry, and I have seen a sea-shell transformed into a gallant war-ship ; and a clear stream turned into a steed."

" Friend warrior," replied Sir James, " a martial wanderer has the privilege of seeing and describing wondrous things, and truly you have seen some marvellous matters." " Which means," said the old man, with a grave smile, " that you imagine I wish to impose a traveller's romancings upon an inexperienced person, who has never been in far lands, and whose knowledge is confined to a little incredulous island. Those things which I describe as having witnessed I am able to perform. I have learned the secret things of many lands, and I care not to show you with what ease I can fulfil your wishes. What would you like to see, what would you wish to learn, and what desire you to possess ? " Sir James smiled, and replied, " I wish to see the wide world, and to possess it all; there is a wish that goes to the very limit of your art, and probably somewhat beyond it." " To show you the whole earth," answered

the old man, is as easy as to show you yon moon. You can first take a look at it, and then decide about possessing it."

The warrior, as he spoke, took his little polished drinking cup to the spring, filled it thrice with pure water, and as often emptied it; he then held it out to Sir James, saying, "Taste of my cup, and then tell me what you see." "To drink from an empty vessel," said the other, seems something miraculous: I saw you scatter the water on the ground, and you have not since filled it." "O!" said the old man, with a laugh, "you have not travelled, therefore you are slow in belief. Be assured, when you have witnessed but half of what I have seen, you will be ready to believe the wildest marvel which poets ascribe to the wands of magicians; but set the cup to your lips, nevertheless, and drink." Sir James set the cup to his lips, and found it filled with a liquid the most delicious he had ever tasted; he drank, still the cup continued full; and when he returned it to the owner he was so overcome, that he knew not whether he stood on earth or air.

"Behold now, Sir Knight," said the warrior, "the world lies far below thee; thou art midway in air like an eagle on the wing, and the green globe of the universe turns round to thy wish, that thou mayst behold how fair, how pleasant, and how delightful it is." Sir James gazed downwards,

and saw the world spread out at his feet with its oceans, its lakes, its mountains, its mainlands, and its isles. Ten thousand cities, and towers, and palaces, glittered on all sides ; war seemed banished from the earth ; labour appeared to have ceased, and joy, mirth, and gladness abounded. On the green fields youths and maidens danced ; in the green woods they wooed, and came singing through the city gates with garlands in their hands. The ground yielded of its own accord, the sweetest of fruits and the fairest of flowers, and the warmth which the sun shot from the sky, made dress an encumbrance. Sir James gazed anxiously on the gay and splendid scene before him. The old man watched his looks, and saw them gradually flush and redden, and he restrained his joy with difficulty.

“Sir Wanderer,” said Sir James, “thou hast shown me only the pleasant side of the great molehill, earth. All is green, blooming, fruitful, and joyous. But earth, believe me, has barren spots, burning wastes, and savage people.” “Sir Knight,” replied the other, “thou art not to judge the wide universe by the barren grounds and tameless people of thy native isle. In other parts, the earth and the fullness thereof, man consecrates to his enjoyment. But what thou seest now, is a vast land yet undiscovered by the dauntless voyagers of Europe. The people are so ignorant, that they are perfectly happy ; are so un-

acquainted with mildness, mercy, and charity, that they join in the dance, instead of the bloody fight; and they have so little of the lordly spirit of civilized man about them, that they seek out no other people for the sake of en chaining them. To be a monarch among these simple-minded people, would be degrading one who has had the honour of leading thirty thousand cut throats to the slaughter; and whose wit is an over-match for the wisdom of the craftiest monarch of the age." "I confess," said the knight, "the scene is too soft and luxurious for me. The world you show me is dissolved in luxury and sunk in softness; and of all these dancing and singing youths there seems not one lusty enough to do a daring deed. For me, that scene is without temptation. Has the world nought better than this?"

The old man smiled, and made reply, "Ah, a knightly mind will still be knightly; a heart bent on heroic deeds despises the shepherd's pipe; and one who rejoices in the neighing of the warhorses as they are spurred on the spears, is too fiery for enjoying peace and pleasure. Behold a sweeter scene than poet ever dreamed of; than saint ever saw in a vision; and yet one real, substantial, and sure." Sir James looked, and saw beneath him an immense expanse of ocean, on which a bright and dazzling sun was setting; it gleamed like

melted gold for many a hundred leagues, while upon its bosom a thousand green isles appeared floating with all their groves, spicy hills, honey vales, and headlands and heights. He heard the songs of innumerable birds, and saw their variegated plumage glancing to the sun; as they flitted from tree to tree; he smelt the most delicious fruits and aromatic gums and spices; and he saw that boon nature called, without stint or limit, the richest productions from the ground.

“Behold,” said the wanderer, “the happy and undiscovered isles. Man’s foot has never profaned the flowery sod; there is no bird of prey, no beast of rapine, no reptile gliding under the sunny grass to invade sleep. How delightfully could a man, with the woman of his love, live on these green and gladsome isles. There the sound of sorrow could never reach him; men with their gross passions and mean pursuits could not find him; he would live like a god of old, and his name and his looks would be transmitted in his descendants.”

“These are indeed lovely isles,” said Sir James; “I wish they had appeared in the days of my youth. I was then a sigher for scenes of retired sweetness, and I dreamed of a lodge in a wilderness with the woman whom I loved. But when I became a man, I thought as a man. To mingle

with kings, counsellors, warriors, poets, and sages, becomes me more than the hermitage. Fruits from the tree, flowers from the field, nature in all her bounty, and woman in all her beauty, can only please for a time. Man seeks intercourse with man, loves to be expatiating on his species, on the universe, and on God. He loves what is solemn, what is deep, what is lofty; he follows the meteor on its path, the storm in its course, the lightning as it flashes, and the thunder as it rolls." The green lovely islands slowly vanished as he spoke, and a scene of a ruder character was presented.

" See," said the old warrior, " beneath you lies a ruder scene, and a stirring people." Sir James looked, and saw, as far as the eye could reach, a wild and uncultivated country covered with green woods, interspersed with vales, waving with luxuriant grass, while a noble river rolled through the wilderness with innumerable flocks of wild fowl swimming on its bosom. The hills were studded with herds of wild cows, the woods were filled with troops of wild horses, while on the plains ten thousand tents were pitched, and the hum of their martial inhabitants was heard far and wide. A trumpet sounded, and forth a myriad of soldiers rushed; stretching their lances before them, and leaning towards their horse's necks, they advanced towards

the south, a mighty and resistless army. They attacked a people who marched against them, and left the wolves and the cormorants a plentiful feast. They laid siege to a lofty city; the towers fell, the people sent up a piteous cry, its men, its women, and its little ones were slain, and a heap of burning dust was all that remained of the lordly place. They rode on, brandishing their spears, and when they reached the uttermost ends of the earth, they spurred their foaming horses into the sea, and sighed that God had made no more lands to conquer.

“Cursed be these furious warriors,” exclaimed Sir James; “they come to destroy as well as to conquer, they are akin to the wild beast of the field, and to spill blood and deface the noble monuments of the earth, are they come. Happy are we in this little sea-girt isle; for we are remote from the danger of that barbarous deluge which seems likely to overflow the earth.”

“Be not too sure of your safety, Sir Knight,” said the veteran, “those barbarians swarm in the northern forests like leaves on a birch at Beltane. They have frames of iron, fierce natures, and having once tasted of the luxuries of a civilized land, they will hurry on in their career of conquest, and spare neither mainland nor isle. But there are other scenes worthier of your contemplation, such

as may please the most fastidious nature, and allure the most stirring and enterprising."

The swarms of barbarous warriors passed away, and a wild and strange scene presented itself. The country seemed a sea of sand, moved by every sweep of the wind, like the waters of the ocean, while amidst the whole, clumps of green trees, little patches of grass and grain, which nature produced to save the land from the reproach of utter sterility, and the remains of noble temples and walled cities appeared to float in this ocean of the desert. Sir James almost started when he saw a troop of mounted warriors coming rushing along in a whirlwind of dust; the wind was not swifter than their steeds, and while they rode they caroled aloud, in the fullness of their joy, songs of love and military deeds.

"See," said the old man, "how perishable and vain all the labours of mankind are. The people who first possessed that desert made it a garden, called on the streams and the brooks to refresh it; built cities, and towers, and temples, and imagined they were laying an empire that would last whilst the sun gave light. Behold everywhere the footmarks of a mighty people, who did all they could to impress their character on their works; but who shall say, go to, we shall build a tower which the spoiler cannot take, fortify a country so that it

cannot be conquered, and lay the foundation of a city which shall endure while trees grow and rivers run? Savage valour was followed by politic wisdom, wisdom was succeeded by luxury, luxury by weakness, and weakness yielded to the first swarm of martial barbarians. These wild warriors as they spur their steeds over the desert, feel the thrill of unbounded liberty, and with their dinner of dried dates, their cup of cold water, their bed beside their steeds, and their habitation shifting with the wind, are happier than he who is surrounded by the splendour of a court, attended by ducking and smiling courtiers, is clothed in purple and in pall, dines on plate; drinks out of gold, sleeps on down, and awakes to a new round of pleasures."

"Sir Warrior," said Sir James, "I thank thee for this patient display which thou hast made of all that the world contains, and truly I must needs say, that the world is much poorer in pleasure, in happiness, and in rational joy, than I had imagined." "O!" exclaimed the other, "be patient, you have seen but a moiety of what the earth has to show; behold the land of poets, historians, artists, and philosophers." Sir James looked, and he saw a land which seemed an isle; it was covered with towns, cities, towers, cathedrals, and palaces; its harbours were filled with ships, and its people were

numerous and industrious. “Hearken, the songs of the poets,” said the aged warrior, “they are inspired by domestic virtue, patriotism, love of country, and the glory of the nation is reflected in their verse, as the stars are in yon lucid lake. The historians, calm, dispassionate, clear, philosophical, and true, have revived the grave vigour of the ancient muse of heroic acts and lofty thoughts, and her artists have impressed on all their productions the look and thoughts of those who fought, meditated, sung, and rendered the nation glorious at home, and admired abroad.” “I can feel all that,” replied Sir James, “for who has not had his happiness increased, and his heart expanded by the poet’s verse, his knowledge extended by the historian’s page, and felt the nature and happy truth of the artist’s pencil and chisel. But I see other labourers at work on the earth; men who neither plough nor sow, nor paint, nor sing, nor think, and yet they work away, and seem to imagine that all the world is indebted to them for boring into the ground, and pronouncing some strange name over the clay and stones which they burrow up.”

“Ah,” answered the old man, “scorn them not, though they are a useless and unprofitable race, who deform and misrepresent nature, under pretence of displaying her beauties. But behold yon meeting of grave, considerate, and learned men;

their table is groaning with costly dishes and rare wines, and around them are piled the accumulated riches of human intellect; all that is divine of Greece and Rome is there: the gaiety of France, the imagination of Scotland, and the thought of England. Amidst all this, what can these magnates of learning be doing; to describe all the mole-hills in the parish, to discuss the merits of a coin from which time has effaced the stamp, to seek a character and find a name for a bust without a head, to determine whether a peck of the charcoal of Herculaneum contained poetry, or law, or religion; these and other matters of equal importance, have gathered those wisemen together, and the result is, a pile of writing which can never be read. Wouldst thou love to become one of them?"

He waited not to be answered, but he waved his hand, the scene gradually disappeared, and to the eye of Sir James a vast continent arose. On an immense plain, two armed nations were banded; banner was displayed against banner, the war-horses neighed, and the shining helmets were so closely wedged, that a man might have walked on warriors heads for a measured mile and more. Crowds of young soldiers pressed eagerly into the front to win their spurs, and two stern and experienced leaders set the nations in array, and looked

on each other with that austere delight which soldiers feel when the trumpet is about to be set to the lip. The face of Sir James kindled up, and when he saw the breathing masses impelled on each other, as if one heart moved all, he smote his thighs with both palms, and exclaimed, “O for a horse and a spear, there is a field worthy of a soldier!” Their war-cries rose in the air, the shocking of the mail-clad warriors was heard, crests fell, and banners waved, then the whole moved rapidly away, and thick darkness hung like a funeral pall between him and the earth.

The old man turned round and said, “What thinkest thou of the wide world? Has it a place worthy of thy regard; dost thou desire to rule and reign among the quarrelsome barbarians of this sterile globe, when creation has amid her vast dominions so many places, and so many nations of whom thou art worthy. To see this world for so many dreary years as I have beheld it, filled with violence and wrong, folly and injustice, may well make us weary and inclined to seek for pleasure and repose in other climes, under a happier dispensation of nature. Look with me, Sir Knight, and I shall show thee a scene worthy of thy ambition.” Sir James turned, and as he turned a hand came before him, and from it something was thrown, which sparkled in his eyes like descending dew.

“Behold now,” said the stranger, “my master’s kingdom, there it rises before you, covered with fruits of a sweeter flavour than aught earthly, shaded by trees of loftier stature and more odorous shade than the brushwood of this world, and watered by nobler rivers, and adorned with more magnificent palaces than the eastern monarchs ever built. Look upon it, and behold the happy creatures who possess it; see what noble steeds yon god-like warriors bestride, the lances which gleam in their hands are no imaginary weapons, and yon fair forms which wave them to the encounter, are breathing dames who reward with their loves the happy conquerors in the splendid tourney. To them wilt thou be welcomed with the right hand and the left, and fair queens and princesses will contend for a glance of thine eye.” He smiled, and looked on Sir James, who stood with horror painted on his brow.

“I see not the scene which is visible to you,” said Sir James, “for I behold a region which makes my blood curdle. I behold a valley of fire, filled with palaces, and towers; a river of flame rushes through the whole, and crowds of men and women are driven to bathe in the liquid element, by shapes which nature has trembled to create, and left undefined. It is awful to look upon. I hear a deep and melancholy cry ascending from that terrible place, and on it the gloomy heaven is

casting down its linked thunderbolts." The old man uttered a loud imprecation, and muttered, "Some subtle spirit of heaven has dispelled the charm that I hung up in the air, which turned the vale of Tophet into Paradise." Sir James looked on the stranger as he uttered this, and started on beholding, instead of a gray warrior, a grim, fierce, and fearful shape: he uttered an exclamation of horror, called on the aid of heaven, his eyes grew dim, his knees shook and doubled under him, and he fell on his face as he named the name of God.

CHAPTER VIII.

Proud, glittering in the moonlight air,
Rose walled town and palace fair;
A river flowed—from many a tower
Came light, and song from lady's bower;
And there I saw a new slain knight,
Blood-stained was all his armour bright.

WHEN Sir James arose, the moon and stars had ceased to shine, and a bright sun was descending fast upon a line of low and distant hills crowned with towers and woods. For the lonesome valley, and the little spring he had a round green hill, with a lofty cross of stone on its summit, at the foot of which he was seated, while Sir Michael stood beside him, looking at the sculptured virgin and child on the cross, round which some devout hands had hung garlands of flowers. On the projecting base it seemed as if knees in multitudes hourly had been kneeling, for the severities of the exercise had worn into the solid substance. A little well held up its mirror of pure water to the sun, within a lance's length of the cross, and an iron ladle, the gift of some pilgrim, was chained to the stone basin, lest it should be carried away as a relic by some enthu-

siastic visitor; or stolen for the value of its material by some unscrupulous person from the huge city which covered the plain and river-bank below.

Sir Michael looked on his companion, and said, "What has become of the military sage in whose words thou takest such delight? It was unkind to leave a knight so venerable and so wise, and in whose good counsel there was so much safety, to come with his hoary head through the night dew, and with his feeble limbs to plod such a weary way as thou hast travelled." In the look of Sir Michael there was something sarcastic. Sir James replied, "There are forms in this world which are not what they seem, evil assumes the hue of good, a spirit of reprobation puts on the port of virtue; and, under pretence of showing the vanities of the world, seeks to give the vale of perdition the splendour of paradise." "Thank thy guardian angel, Sir James," interrupted Sir Michael, "for dispelling the delusion which a reprobate spirit spread before thee; a ray of divine light revealed the fiery vale of punishment, and saved thee from descending lower than Gomorrah. Be not vain nor lifted up therefore, thou art saved, but not by thine own strength; to his guile was celestial art opposed, and the tempter went foiled and furious away. Cast thyself on thy knees, there is a God above to whom thanks for thy preservation are due." Sir

James bowed his head to the earth; uttered a brief thanksgiving; and arose relieved in mind, and with a cheerful look.

“Knowest thou the hill on which thou standest?” said Sir Michael; “that river which moves along so deep and broad, and the noble city which adorns its bank? Look stedfastly, and answer me yea or nay.” Sir James looked down, first on the wide river, which shone in the sinking sun like a sea of gold; then on the noble city, which, enclosed with a massy wall, and defended by lofty towers, stretched along the northern bank of the stream, with all its splendid churches, palaces, and mansions of its merchants, nobility, and princes. He saw its triple gates, through which the youth of the city poured abroad with the mid-day sun to enjoy the green fields, and their sports and pastimes; and returned again by sunset, when the warders secured them with bar and bolt. He saw crowds of busy and laborious citizens thronging through the streets, troops of young and lordly dames, their velvets glancing, and their jewels sparkling at every step, while groups of grave and thoughtful men discussed the affairs of the nation, and entertained questions of policy, or learning, or genius.

“I see,” said Sir James, “a magnificent city, like Tyre of old, whose merchants were princes; I see an Exchange thronged with sea captains and

traders from distant countries; streets filled with a numerous and laborious people, who seem watching the coming of some procession of monks, or pilgrims, for they all bear green boughs in their hands. What rare and profitable relic has the church discovered that they usher it into public notice by a holiday; a rib bone of Saint Lud; the sting of the dragon's tail which Saint George vanquished; a feather from the wing of Noah's dove; honey from the bees of the riddle of Sampson; the church can cast an atmosphere of holiness and importance around any thing, and go fed and clad on the credulity of mankind."

"The people," answered Sir Michael, "have more substantial relic to welcome; the relic they have poured out of their homes to worship are of the sword, not of superstition. Behold a procession of martial pilgrims; does the sight give thee joy?" Sir James gazed anxiously down from the hill; he beheld the gates pouring out their eager thousands of young and old, on foot and on horseback, with banners spread, and green branches waving; while advancing to meet this shouting tide of citizens he saw along the northern road a long train of captains and captives. His colour changed as he gazed, for he saw the spoils of Flodden field borne along in triumph; the heavy culverins dragged onwards, covered with garlands,

by horses whose riders wore laurel in their helmets; while behind walked a crowd of disarmed warriors, guarded by the bowmen of the Tyne, and the men at arms of Northumberland."

"Sorrowful mayst thou look," said Sir Michael; "thou seest no imaginary scene; the prospect before thee is not painted out of air; nor are these men the juggling pilgrims of a rapacious church. Thou beholdest the capital of thine enemy's land, the dwelling place of Harry Tudor; these captains are thy conquerors, and these captives are the men who survive the fatal field of Flodden. But the bravest of thy native land, alas! are not there; they lie naked and unburied on a bloody plain, and the unbridled war-horse rushes over them in quest of his master. Let us go and unite ourselves to the procession. But speak;—choose whose form thou wouldest wish to wear; for in thine own thou canst not appear and live free?" Sir James smiled, and answered, "Lend me the look of one whose spurs are not yet won, who longs to do some deed of arms, and has an arm as well as the spirit to perform it." "Thou hast thy wish," replied Sir Michael; "look there, and say how well such a shape becomes thee." Sir James glanced into the pure mirror of the little spring, and exclaimed, starting back, "Patrick Lindsaye; but I shall do no deed that may dishonour one of the

purest and worthiest knights of the whole north country: let us go." And they mingled with the crowd.

"Take that, thou proud Scot," said a Westmoreland archer, striking Sir James with his slackened bow; "take that for a malapert Scot; thou wast not so forward at Flodden, by my faith, else thou hadst failed to bring away that body without an honourable testimony from sword or arrow." "I'll tell thee, Richard," said a billman, interposing, "an thou learns not more civility for those on whom dame fortune has turned the back of her hand, I shall beat a little into that hard noddle of thine with the steel end of my bill," and he raised his weapon and menaced the archer, who strung his bow in a moment, and, touching the nerve with his forefinger, looked lowering in the other's face, while the string of his bow raised a sound like swarming bees in a sunny day. "I care no more for thy stick and thy string, Dick," said the other, a bold yeoman from Appleby, "than Moll of Preston cared for thy hanging lip and saffron visage when she followed Ned Dawson of Rugby."

The archer had plucked an arrow from the quiver, and had drawn his bow-string within a span of his right ear, when a blow from a partizan struck him to the pavement. "Bows! bows!" shouted a

hundred archers, and they raised their formidable weapons, and directed their points against the billmen and spearmen, who brought up the rear of the procession. The narrow way and the pressing crowd rendered their bows nearly harmless, and left them at the mercy of the others, but for their short sharp swords, which were readily plucked out, and many a blow and thrust were given, and much blood was spilt, before order could be restored.

“Who made this ill-timed fray?” enquired Lord Henry Beaumont, “if he be an archer, I shall have his Kendal-green doublet plucked over his head, and beat him back to the north with his own bow. If he be a billman, three good bangs shall he bide with the shaft of his own weapon, and for the next campaign he shall be the last in the attack and the first in the retreat.” “It was Dick Featherstone,” said a billman; “he struck one of the proud Scots with his bow, and Hob Noble of Applebly broke his jaw with his partizan.” “Who, I?” cried the archer, “I struck no proud Scot since I struck them with my cloth-yard-shafts on Flodden-edge.” “It was North-Riding Rugby himself,” said one of the archers; “I saw him strike John of Kendal by the same token that blood followed the blow.” Rugby of the North Riding, a fiery spearman, repelled the charge by a round oath of his innocence, and by a blow on the

mouth of the accuser, which displaced three of his teeth. “Stand back,” said the archer, drawing his bow and discharging his arrow, which, glancing from the steel gorget of the yeoman, struck one of the war-horses to the heart. The horse, plunging in the pangs of death, threw down several soldiers and stopt up the narrow gate of the city. Swords flashed on all sides, lances were levelled, and arrows flew, and the noise of the tumult startled the citizens, and run along the streets. Sir James heard the wild laugh of Brunelfin above the din of the strife.

“Sir James,” said Sir Michael, “of what fiery materials man is made. Seest thou yon burly groom with the brandished lance; an invisible hand deals a blow which makes him stoop and stagger, and in revenge he thrusts his comrade through the body. Behold yon archer with the arrow laid in the string; a bill in an unseen hand leaves him only strength to draw an arrow, which strikes a spearman down. Hark! the greenwood bugle blast of the incensed archers; now their arrows will come in flocks together like the wild swans from whose wings they are fledged. Hearken, too, the horn of the ready billmen; now for thrust of spear and blow of bill. This proud triumph of Lord Howard will cost his country dear.” “Alas, poor hinds,” said Sir James, “why should they slay one another? Ad-

monish thy page, and let him find out some more innocent way of amusing himself than by spilling blood." "When," answered Sir Michael, "thou talkest of sparing man's blood, then there is hope of thy amendment. Brunelfin knows thy wish and mine; he is come here to annoy the Southron, let him have it his own way; but there shall be no more blood-spilling."

The soldiers were now reduced to order, and the city-gates were shut and bolted behind them. But the movements had been so slow, that the sun was set ere the last bar was replaced by the hands of the cautious warder. When the sun retired, sudden darkness rushed down from the sky, and involved the leaders of the English chivalry in sevenfold confusion. Torches were called for, and as promptly they came; but instead of shedding a regular and steady light, they startled about like meteors; now here, now there; behind, before, now singeing the plumes of the soldiers, then flashing high in the air and threatening to set the city in flames. Under this wild and extraordinary light no man knew his brother's face; all appeared strange and wild, distorted and discoloured.

"Now's the time, Diccon," said a borderer, who had fought for three distinguished persons in his day, namely, the king of England, the king of Scotland, and himself; "now's the time, Diccon,

to relieve one of the London churls of his gold. See this window is full of jewellery, and my Kirstine, thou knowest, has need of a trinket or two to make her look tempting." The soldier into whose ear this was whispered, turned hastily round and exclaimed, " Knave, darest thou utter such a wish to me?—but stay, thou art fool as well as knave surely, for these jewels of thine are only gilt gingerbread; be silent, and indulge in none of thy knaveries here." " Saint Andrew and St. George too, muttered the astonished borderer, I spoke to Diccon of Grahamsdyke, and who should answer me but Sir Hugh Selby of Saint Bees."

King Henry, with his nobles, had come forth to welcome the victor, and his right hand was held out to Surrey when this unwonted darkness descended. The bewildering fires which came flashing round on all sides dazzled the courtiers, and as they streamed to and fro like lights in the northern sky, ten thousand pale faces were turned up in dismay; the priests prayed and invoked the saints; the ladies trembled for their splendid trains, and the king for the dagger of the domestic foe. " Welcome, my Lord Howard," said King Henry, " and welcome too all thy fellow-warriors; but by the Confessor's bones, man, thou comest strangely attended; thou hast taken ten thousand meteors captive as well as ten thousand Scots."

“ Truly, my liege,” answered the Earl, “ I have ceased to marvel at wonders; our whole march from Flodden-edge hither has been accompanied by all manner of wild and wonderful things. The very dead rose before my face and rode on horseback. No minstrel ever witnessed, in the wildest mood of his imagination, marvels more strange than I. I wish we had a poet worthy of embodying them in rhyme.”

“ Sir Earl,” replied the Bishop of Lincoln, “ it is the fault of good and stout soldiers like thyself to go to battle without the company of pious and holy men, whose presence would check the evil invisible power, and keep the camp free from the power of Satan.” “ My Lord Bishop then thinks,” answered the Earl, meekly, “ that the prayers and the presence of a pious and sound divine would have saved us from the visitations of those strange shapes and wild encounters. Truly, if your reverence thinks so, even try your virtue in a contest with these meteor torches, which belong to the kingdom of him with whom the church wages religious war.” “ It becomes thee not, Earl Surrey,” said the Bishop, “ to scoff at the pious efforts of holy men, nor to imagine that all which behold you beyond the scope of your judgment belongs to the evil place. May not these lights be kindled in honour of the overthrow which the arms

of a pious monarch have given to a licentious king? The light which shines may be light from heaven.” “Aye,” answered the Earl, “but not the light which leads astray, and this seems to be one of those.” “We shall see,” replied the prelate, holding up his hands. “Light, if thou art come hither for evil, begone whence thou hast come. I command thee to go.” “Call again, priest,” muttered Lord Mowbray, “the false light hears not what your reverence says.” In a moment the waving lights were extinguished, and the lamps and torches of the citizens alone showed the way to the king and his chief captains.

“Now behold yon proud prelate,” said Sir James to his companion, “his success with Brunelfin’s fairy-lights will doubly increase his dignity; his exploit will go forth to the world, and be blazoned through every land by the ready tongues of a lying priesthood, who are willing to exalt the commonest operations of nature into marvels wrought by holy men, and miracles performed by saints.” “O vex not thy spirit about the matter,” said Sir Michael, “my tricky page raises the proud priest only that he may pluck him down at his proudest. Hearken, we shall have some minstrelsy of another stamp than what kings hear at court.” As he spake, a shrill cry was heard over head, and a voice, which seemed sometimes drop-

ing from the sky, springing from the ground, or coming from the bier on which the body of one of the Scottish leaders was laid, chaunted a song, of which this imperfect copy survives.

WILLIAM WALLACE.

I.

O London town ! O London town !
 'Gainst palace, tower, and wall,
 And judge's cap, and monarch's crown,
 I lift my voice, and call.
 The cannon-burst shall tame thy might,
 And down thy stately street
 Red blood shall reek, and children shriek,
 Beneath thy conqueror's feet.
 There's not a stone in thy strong wall,
 Nor rafter in thy palace,
 But what shall tremble yet, and smoke,
 For blood of William Wallace !

II.

O London town ! O London town !
 Built on the sea-broad Thame,
 'Tis not the force of foreign foes
 Thy giant strength shall tame ;
 The Frenchman on his war-steed fierce,
 The Spaniard on the main,
 Shall shake the lance, and spread the sail
 Against thy shores in vain.
 When nought but gray men fill your halls,
 And orphans crowd your vallies,
 And thy best blood like water runs,
 Then think on William Wallace !

III.

O London town! O London town!
With what a shout there came
To casement wide, and turret high,
Serf, knight, and lord, and dame;
The bills and axes flashed before,
Behind shone many a spear,
And there he rode who tamed your earls,
And chased your chiefs like deer.
O thou didst send a glad voice forth
From all thy streets and alleys—
Lo! Scotland's hero comes in chains,
Come gaze on William Wallace!

IV.

O London town! O London town!
Ye sang to see him pass
In bonds, who warred for liberty,
And tyrants trod like grass;
With chains on those heroic limbs,
On his young head a crown
In mockery, and that right hand bound
Which struck your proudest down.
A herald cried with a loud voice,
“ Prepare the axe and gallows,
For here comes Scotland's rebel chief
And traitor, William Wallace !”

V.

O London town! O London town !
In bondage through thy street,
'Twas sad to see the hero ride
A traitor's doom to meet.

Fierce Edward stood, and grimly smiled
 To see him calmly stand,
 The judge upon the judgment seat,
 The headsman at his hand.
 “ Thou slewest our lieges and our lords,
 With corses choked our vallies,
 Thy head shall stand on London gate—
 What sayest thou, William Wallace ?”

VI.

The hero on old Edward threw
 A fearless glance and free,
 “ I’ve knelt to God, Sir King,” he said,
 “ But never knelt to thee.
 Free have I lived, as free I ’ll die—
 Yet tremble in thy guilt,
 For every drop my body bleeds,
 Ten thousand shall be spilt.
 The tyrant’s deeds high God condemns,
 The freeman’s fate he hallows ;
 Men’s hate is thine, their love is mine—
 Lead on !”—said William Wallace.

“ Priest,” said Lord Howard, “ canst thou not stay that traitorous chaunt. What is thy piety worth, if it fail to silence the fiend when he turns traitor.” “ Sir Earl,” answered the prelate, “ I am not prepared to say that the song is of an evil origin. The Wallace was a free-born chief, and of a free nation ; and surely our first Edward sinned in seeking to enslave him, and more sorely still in striking off his head. Our Edward made him die like a traitor ; our Henry would have revered him

as a hero." "By heavens! Sir Priest," answered Lord Howard, "if thou sayest one word more in that rebel's praise, I shall strike thee where thou standest with my truncheon." "Howard, Howard," replied the prelate, with a meek and undaunted air, "that warrior was no traitor; and I shall ever revere his memory for his kindness to the monks of Heckmondsham. 'Abide with me,' he said, 'for my men are evil doers, and I may not chastise them.'" Howard forgot in whose presence he stood, also the holiness of the person of his opponent, and in a moment discharged such a blow with his steel truncheon on the shoulder of the prelate, that had his body been of brass, instead of frail flesh, it could not have failed to have prostrated him. "So serve I all proud priests," he exclaimed, "I should have done it, had it been Pope Julius himself." "Why, what hast thou done man," said the king peevishly, "that thou shouldest thus vaunt thyself? My good bishop and thee must be friends. What sayest thou, Lincoln: wilt thou give thy hand to Howard?" "Gladly, my liege," answered the prelate; "and I take the opportunity of admonishing him to speak with more reverence of those who live in the bosom of the church. My lord of Surrey believes too in divination and magic, and he practises poetry, and other unholy arts."

Lord Howard held out his hand at the king's order in the deepest astonishment. "Magic!" he muttered. "By the splendour of heaven, and the darkness of the pit, magic abounds! I saw him rolling in the dust, clenching his hands, and gnashing his teeth; yet there he stands unharmed, and I must needs receive the hand he presents." "Lord of Surrey," said the prelate, "thou art a worthy leader, and well and wisely hast thou warred in the north; but there are matters of high concernment, in which thou art little otherwise than a heathen. Thou givest food, raiment, and largesses, to vain and licentious minstrels, who turn the story of their song against the holiness of the church, and insinuate a belief of its looseness and impurity into the minds of men. Thou art thyself a maker of slight and frivolous rhymes, wherein the brightness of a lady's eyes, the sweetness of her speech, and the youthful glance of her face, nay, even her feet and nimble ancles, are all made into gods, before which thou fallest down and dost homage. Thou didst also consort with one familiar with demons, who showed thee the face of Lady Grace Percy in a glass, languishing for thy love, when between thee and her roared a wide sea. Think of these things and repent thee, Lord Earl."

The procession now advanced without interrup-

tion. “He of Lincoln,” said Sir Michael, “is a good prelate, and though somewhat puffed up in pride by imagining himself a prophet, which circumstances strongly countenanced, yet his notion of civil liberty, and admiration of the hero of Scottish freedom, won my heart, and subdued the merry maliciousness of Brunelfin. Had not the good prelate uttered his bold defence of the elfin’s song, there would have been wild work with earls, coronets, and reverend wigs.” Sir James laid his hand on his, and said, “Look there! look there! What carry they on that bier? See! the blood trickles through that velvet pall, and a sword, a broken spear, and a cloven crown, lie above it. It is the body of some of our noblest warriors, a gallant Gordon, a valiant Linsaye, a brave Herries; or, to name all in one, a good and heroic Douglas.” “What wouldst thou think,” said Sir Michael, “if it happened to be a Stuart?” “And a Stuart indeed it is,” said an English soldier, “and a royal one too. There he lies, who, for a woman’s smile and a wanton’s lip, led his bold thousands to an English grave. ’Tis a pity of him too, for he was a stout soldier, and bore himself right royally when the day went against him. All wouldn’t do, my masters: the Scottish spear and Michael’s magic are poor defences against an English war-axe and a gray-goose shaft. His

head will grace London-gate, beside that of William Wallace. A curse on the name ! He killed my ancestor, a fierce Fenwick, and slew his two sons, and for that his scull deserves a bleaching." And he pointed with his spear to a human head, which was fixed over the portal through which they were about to pass.

Sir James gazed upwards, and it was not without awe that he beheld a human head, shedding from its eyes a bright light, which startled the horses, and alarmed the king and his nobles. "To thy tools, my good Bishop," said Lord Howard, "to thy tools; the evil spirit has got into thy favourite hero's scull, and thou canst not say that the light thou seest is light from heaven. Had it come with a helmet and plume, and with sword or spear, a Howard might have accepted the challenge, but this defiance comes manifestly within the rules of the church, and accept it thou must." "Lord Earl," replied the prelate, "when that heroic head wore steel, when the manly body was united to it, and life animated the whole, I have not heard that a Howard sought the honourable danger of withstanding it." "A truce to this unprofitable talk," said the King Henry; "the head of the bold warrior deserves the care of the church, and with to-morrow's sun it shall be interred in holy ground. Vengeance hath had its day, and the hour of mercy hath come at last."

"Saints of Heaven, and our blessed Lady, shield us," said the Bishop of Lincoln, "what unholy sound is that? I hear as if ten thousand warriors on horseback were rushing through the air. Lo! I see the glittering of their breast-plates, and the quivering light of their spears." "I hear no sound, and I see none of the imaginary warriors," exclaimed Lord Howard; "and yet I see all that is between me and the sky. This now will make a fair legend for the miracle book of Lincoln cathedral, which he of the lake of darkness daily overlooks, and says that it is good."—"Peace, peace, Howard," said King Henry, "some terrible thing is present; I hear such sounds in the air as rise from a battle field." "Run for thy relics, Sir Priest," said Howard, "else we shall be all overawed and vanquished by a peaceable scull which has stood on London-gate these two hundred years, and underneath which the city maidens dance on May-day."

A veteran soldier, who had followed Howard through all his wars, and fought by his side, laid his hand on his leader's arm, and said, "Look there! my Lord, look there!" and he held his sword into the murky air, and gazed like one who beholds something fearful. "Nay, Ralph Fenwick," said Lord Howard, "if thou feelest fear I may well feel it by faith; but by the Sur-

rey's soul I see nothing. What seest thou?" "I see," said the soldier, with a shudder, "a broad banner displayed in the air; the very banner which flowed o'er the Royal tent on Flodden-edge; it is torn and bloody, even as it was when trodden among our horses' feet. I see many a helmeted and plumed head around it. And, saints of heaven, what is this? Look there, look there, my Lord. On marrowless bones there comes flesh; to the dead there comes life."

The fearful vision which alarmed Ralph Fenwick was visible to others. "I vow seven gold candlesticks to the shrine of our Lady at Ripon," said Sir Hugh Percy; "this pageant is from the pit, since it comes in the shape of an enemy." "And I vow a silver font to the shrine of St. Thomas at York," said Sir Edward Mordaunt; "have we to fight the Scots in the air and on land too." "And I give my fair estate of Haselton," said Sir Andrew Hazelrigg, "to be laid out in long sincere masses for the repose of the Scottish chieftain's soul; he slew my ancestor, but I war not with his dust." "I am but a poor knight," exclaimed Sir Anton Bulmer, "and have no gold to vow, nor lands to give; but found thou the church, and provide for the Mass, Hazelrigg, and, by Saint George, I shall see that the lazy priests do the good office." "Spare all your vows," said King Henry,

"and pass on to Westminster Hall; I in some sort agree with stout Howard here, that this pageant has been prepared to surprise us; what thinks our good bishop?"

The bishop looked into the air for a little space, and said, "this pageant is not of man; nor is it altogether either of hell or heaven. Of the spirits which haunt the earth some are blessed, some are reprobate, and others are both." "A kind of Borderers, my lord Bishop," interrupted Howard, "who are akin to both countries, and plunder both." "Your simile is just, my lord," continued the prelate, "and those spirits not wholly blessed, nor yet wholly reprobate, are left loose on earth to fulfil the predictions of the saints; to keep man awake to a sense of his sins; to induce penance, fast, vigil, and the abasement of the flesh. To us, not as saints, but as sinners, are these shapes come, and they have, in part, fulfilled their purpose, since these good knights have vowed so largely to the church. Doth my Lord Howard vow nothing?" "When I see any thing I shall vow," replied Howard. "What sees the reverend and holy Prelate?" I see all that thou seest, and no more," replied the priest; but he is by my side who will tell thee what he sees. Come hither, brother Ambrose."

Brother Ambrose came forward at the prelate's

call, and presented a form which merited the looks of surprise, and even alarm, with which Howard's veterans regarded him. His head, neck, arms, and legs were naked, hairy as a wolf-hound, and brown with exposure to sun and wind; a shirt, or rather close garment of sack-cloth, was bound about his middle, with a twisted rope of hair; his beard, matted and gray, descended on his bosom; in his left hand he held a printed book, and in his right a scourge, which had been recently applied to his own shoulders. He waited for no introduction, but tossed his hands wildly, and cried, "A woe, and a woe to this land; from the ground there comes a cry, and in the air there is a vision, denouncing wrath, war, and judgment. I looked, and I beheld on the gate of this proud city a watcher, a terrible watcher; a bloody sword was in one hand, and a burning torch was in the other, and he stood and cried, I give your sons to the sword, and your daughters to defilement, for ye hearken not to the words of my holy ones; ye become your own gods, and each man interpreteth the word of the Most High according to the wish of his own heart. For our blessed Lady and our glorious saints ye set up painted idols, and ye bow to the interpretations of mere man, nor regardeth the holy watcher, whose throne is on the seven hills." "Out upon thee, false knave," exclaimed

Sir George Beaumont, “wilt thou preach down knowledge that comes from God, and set up an Italian priest for a divinity?” The prophet seemed insensible to the reproach; his eyes rolled, and his hands were raised wildly, and he looked into the midnight air.

“Lo! and the spirit cometh again,” he cried; “cometh in the shape of England’s terrible enemy; even the hero who was drawn and quartered. In the south there shone a light, and from the light there came a shape, and the shape became that of a mighty warrior, with a helmet of fire upon his head, and a sword of flame in his hand. Lo! there the fearful vision stalks before us; look ye all, and tremble.” “Why, priest, this is the rarest madness,” said the Earl Marshal, “I see nothing but the cloud of darkness which retires before our torches.” “Yes,” replied the priest, “but in the cloud moves the terrible shape; see, lo! and behold, it stops at Whitehall; it points to the ground; it expands to sevenfold stature; lo! it vanishes in a shower of fire and blood.” As he said this, the darkness seemed cloven asunder, and a column of vivid fire flashed over their heads, and town, tower, palace, church, and river, gleamed as brightly as at noon; each warrior saw his fellow’s face for a moment, as if it had been dipt in blood and flame.

“By heaven, Sir Priest,” said Lord Mordaunt, “I could have prophesied a better prophesy than thine, but I could not have made so bright a vision. If thou wilt come and be my guest at Mordaunt tower, thou shalt have a robe fit for a cardinal, a table from which seven bishops might rise satisfied, and gold enough to endow a chapel; for, by the mass, thou wilt make a rare comrade during the Christmas festivities.” The prophet made no reply, but moved onward silently till he came to Whitehall; he stopt, pointed to the ground, and said, “Henry Tudor of England, thy blood, and the blood of him who was foiled at Flodden shall stain that ground when there is none to help. The crown shall be taken from thy descendant’s hand; the head from his body, and his throne shall be given to his enemies for a season, that his race may know there is a God who punishes oppression, cruelty, thirst of blood, lust, covetousness, and sinful abuse of power.” The Priest mixed with the crowd as he spake, and the procession proceeded towards Westminster Abbey.

CHAPTER IX.

And when that they came to the middle of the course,
The steed to his rider began to discourse ;
He rolled his large eye, and his black mane he tost,
If ye bless me or spur me, your journey is lost.

OLD SONG.

IT was with awe and reverence that Henry and his nobles entered the silent abbey, and walked slowly over the graves of the dead. A thousand banners won from the Heathens, the Danes, the French, and the Scots, streamed over their heads ; on the walls the sculptured figures of many a prince and warrior were sleeping or praying, in their military garb, and underneath lay the bones of the illustrious worthies of old England, their names engraven on the gray marble. Long lines of waxen tapers, and long rows of sandalled monks were on each side, and as the warriors marched silently along, each bearing his helmet and his sheathed sword in his hand, the clink of their golden spurs raised an unusual echo among the abbey aisles.

Six men now appeared bearing the body of a warrior, covered with a velvet pall, and ornamented

at the corners with the figures of angels in prayer, with clasped hands and closed wings. A crown of gold, a bloody sword, and armour pierced with war-axe and arrow, were grouped on the top, while on each side walked twelve noble Scottish captains; their heads were bared, their hands laid over their bosoms, and velvet cloaks of the darkest hue were clasped round their necks, and descended nigh to their knees. They looked on the noble pile above them, where the captive flags of their country floated; they looked on the walls around, where they saw the tombs of martial prelates and pious kings; and they looked on the dead body before them, on the living forms beside them, and sighed deeply for the disasters which had befallen their country. King Henry and his nobles knelt down, and the abbot of Westminster uttered a prayer full of tenderness to the conquered, praise to the victorious, and eulogiums upon the wisdom and sagacity of the monarch who chose so good a leader. Nor did he conclude it without an insinuation that something was owing to the unremitting and zealous prayers of the church, that a revelation of victory was made to him, whilst he prayed at the tomb of Edward the Confessor, and intimated that some of the holy niches were destitute of silver saints, for the fashioning of which he imagined the spoils of the Scots were wondrously well adapted.

“ By the mass, Sir Abbot,” said Lord Howard, as he rose from the penance of a prayer a full hour in length, “ you know nothing of the people of whom you speak. All the gold in Scotland went to make the king a crown, and all the silver of the kingdom was not enough to make spurs for the youths whom James knighted as he crossed the border. Of iron I have taken good store, and thou art as welcome to it as the flower to May; let some prudent saint try his skill, and convert it into metal suitable to be worshipped. You may have heard of good knocks in the Scottish wars, but never of a good booty.”

When the procession entered the abbey, Sir Michael took Sir James into a little darksome crypt, wherein a silver censer burned, with a skull and a book beside it. He closed the door and said, “ Follow me, much must be done, and to do it well we must do it speedily.” He took the silver lamp in his hand, descended many steps, and hastened along a vaulted passage which led them to the side of the Thames; the river glimmered before them deep and broad. Sir Michael placed the lamp at his foot, and said, “ Rich and consecrated vessel which has shed light for a thousand years, showing men the pages of truth and holiness, let thy glory shine on this darksome water, till this mortal and I fulfil our voyage.” As he spoke, the censer

streamed seven fold bright, and bank and stream gleamed beneath its pure and constant radiance. Touching the bank lay a small boat. Sir Michael leaped in, pushed it from the side, it darted suddenly along the dimpling water, and soon the abbey and the walled city, with all its towers, became invisible. But the vivid light still gleamed on their path, and guided them to a small harbour, where a flight of steps led them to a green bank, over which the moon threw the shadow of a lofty and noble ruin, which rose roofless into the air.

“Behold,” said Sir Michael, “the wreck in which war glories. This fair abbey fed daily an hundred poor at its gates; its monks visited and healed the sick and the lame, conversed with the wise and the learned, gave food and raiment to the virtuous minstrel, and said masses for the souls of the poor soldiers who fell in far lands, at the call of the vain and ambitious. A knight bleeding and severely wounded, the relic of a battle field, came, with his enemies behind him, and laid hold of the altar. His foes rushed in, stained the altar with his blood, threw fire on the sacred pile, consumed it, scattered its people, seized its lands, and now hold them as the violent hold the earth by the sword and by the spear.” As he said this they entered the church by a small postern.

It was not without awe, that Sir James stood

and looked on the crumbling pile, from the summit of which the long grass waved, while out of the innumerable joints of its masonry, the flowers shot in tufts, in strings and tassels, and in the niches and recesses the birds of carnage built nests and brought forth their young. The moon-beams glimmered through the broken window and the shattered niche, and showed the processions of pilgrims, the performance of miracles, and passages of scripture embodied in stone, and decaying under the exposure to the moist island climate. Beneath their feet were the graves of ancient kings and nobles ; belted knights were there, and many a proud abbot and abbess.

“ Sir James,” said Sir Michael, “ my heart is sad for Scotland ; her king is an infant, her nobles are on their nurses knees, and so deeply has the sword of the Southron struck, that she has neither men of wisdom nor courage left to represent her in an enemy’s land. Listen to me. The glory of a country lies not in jewelled coronets, and embroidered cloaks, nor is the importance of an ambassador in the trappings of his steeds, and the splendour of his retinue. Let us go and present ourselves before yon proud king, and his numberless courtiers, and tell him that Scotland is sorrowful but not subdued ; that she has sons capable of asserting her dignity, and

maintaining her independence ; and that it would become him to treat his prisoners with tenderness, and place the body of the warrior king among those of the princes of his land.” Sir James smiled, and replied, “ Let them offer what indignity they chuse to the body they have borne so far, for be assured, Sir Knight, they insult not the remains of James the knight-errant, as Surrey called him. They show indeed the robe of the king, but where is the penance-chain of iron, which never has, and will not be separated from his body till it sinks into dust. But let us go and fulfil thy wish.”

They stood for a little space, then Sir Michael went to a royal tomb, round which angels knelt by the side of a warrior, cut out of black marble. He looked for a moment on the moon, which was slowly sinking behind the pile of ruins, leaving all the interior in dark shadow, and he took a handful of dust from the tomb, and showered it into the air ; the air grew dark as doomsday, and in the darkness Sir James imagined he saw like the form of some living thing.

“ Behold,” said Sir Michael, “ a steed fit for a king’s errand ! ” and as he spoke the darkness dissolved away, and a war-horse, as black as the raven’s breast, stood beside them. Light streamed from his eyes, and smoke from his nostrils. Sir

James marvelled to see a creature so noble, its mane flowed like a wave of the sea, and there was a bridle in its lips, which shone like the polished steel. “I never beheld so stately a creature,” said Sir James; “but his limbs are too long for his body, else a more glorious animal never was spurred against spears.” Sir Michael smiled, and cried, “Mount him, nor heed his length of limb; he will bear you like the charger of a king. Mount him, spur him, and spare not, for he comes from the dust of Scotland’s worst enemy, Edward Longshanks.”

Sir James, whose hand was already on the animal’s mane, and his left foot rising from the ground, stept back at once, and exclaimed, “How dare you thus profane the dust of a line of kings? Is there no dull and sordid dust lying here, that you must insult the ashes of the fierce and heroic king, who warred so well for Christendom against the heathen? Let him sleep in his own land, sheltered by the walls which his piety reared.” “Well art thou named James the errant-knight,” answered the other; “but all thy pity for aught of a royal line can have no influence over what is not of this world; the will of God ordains that the spiller of righteous blood shall be punished in flesh and in spirit. The brute-shadow of this bloody king shall go to sleep again, till summoned

by some evil spirit from the tomb, to endure a more galling load than thine." He took the bridle from its lips, and it vanished among the tombs.

"I shall try to suit you, Sir Knight," said Sir Michael; "I shall seat you on a controller of kings, a deposer of princes—one who could set his sandalled foot on the neck of monarchs, and with his right hand open the gate of heaven." And he went to a tomb, on which was carved a mitre and a pastoral crook, round which millions of knees had knelt, and the sick imagined themselves cured. He took a handful of dust, threw it into the air, and the air became suddenly dark. A thick cloud ascended from the tomb. Sir Michael walked into the darkness, and led forth a noble steed, whose sides had never felt human spurs, and on whose feet cold iron had never been fixed.

"Mount him, James, mount him," said Sir Michael. "In his human form, and when the breath of God animated him, he was the bitter enemy of kings, and an implacable enemy of the people. To a foreign priest he sought to enslave this land; the monarch's sceptre he trod under his feet; he dissolved human oaths and vows as the sun dissolves the snow; and but for the patriotic swords of three bold knights, our island would have been one great harem of licentious nuns and dissolute monks; and the name of England had

been mute in martial deeds for ever." Sir James muttered, " Saint Thomas à Becket, with your leave, I must even do with you as you did with the kings of the earth. Alas! to what extremes religious frenzy drives us, when a bloody, base, and bigoted priest, is worshipped as a god, and his intercession in our favour is sought by naked knees, long pilgrimages, and presents of gold and land." And seizing the mane he vaulted upon its back, wheeled it round and round, and darted into the open air; as he wished, so it moved. " Fierce priest," said Sir James, " I have thee at my mercy, and I would that my enemies were before me, and the lances in the rest, that I might teach thee how terrible warfare is." And giving him the rein, the steed started away into the open fields.

Sir Michael staid but a short time behind. He went to the door of a dungeon, on the sides of which the rings and bolts still remained where the church chained its victims. Graves were there, into which the reeking corse had been huddled; and niches were in the walls, which had closed round the young and living and blooming. He stood and looked for a moment, and said, " No: the spirit of evil need not remain where blood has been unjustly shed;" and he went into a secret chamber, richly ornamented with flowers and figures. Seven niches,

with their seven seats, and corresponding tables of stone, still remained; an eighth had been removed, where the head of the abbey presided, and gave judgment on those who transgressed against the laws of the church, who blasphemed the saints, ridiculed the relics, expressed doubt of miracles, and held Saint Thomas à Becket to be of inferior importance, compared to our Saviour.

“Here,” said Sir Michael, pausing on the threshold, “the crimes of the church were conceived; the deed of lasciviousness, the act of oppression upon body or conscience, the treason against civil freedom, the invention of lying legends and imposing miracles, the sale of seats in heaven and exemption from hell—so here will the evil presence be;” and stooping down, he took dust in both hands, and threw it towards the roof. The dust, as it descended, seemed transformed to a shower of fire, and while it fell Sir Michael said, “Demon of evil, who haunteth this place, if ever deed worthy of eternal reprobation was plotted here, I charge thee to come, and come in the shape of a steed. Demon, that haunteth this place, if thou hopest for salvation, when in the fulness of time thy crimes are expiated, I command thee to come hither.” As he spoke the wall shook like the sides of a tent, the ground seemed convulsed, and the whole place was filled with a dark vapour.

Into the midst of the murky exhalation he shook his ivory bridle; and Sir James, who awaited his appearance with impatience, saw figures formed of fire passing and repassing the shattered windows, heard a whirlwind singing among the aisles, and then saw Sir Michael come suddenly forth, seated on a steed coal-black in colour, of exquisite shape, and extraordinary swiftness. The creature was of common size, but he moved as if he felt not the earth, and at one bound he reached the side of Sir James, whose horse acknowledged his presence by a violent shudder.

“ Ah! then,” said Sir Michael, “ there’s grace in the church yet, when a priest trembles in the presence of one of the lesser fiends. Move! Move! King Henry and his nobles are at prayers in Westminster Abbey: we shall meet him at the northern gate, and plead the cause of Scotland.” “ Truly,” answered Sir James, “ our mission will be unheeded; we will appear with so little of the pomp and circumstance of ambassadors, that the nobles will mock us, and taunt us about poor Scotland’s gear. I see not how this wild undertaking of thine, Michael, can come to good.” “ I do believe thee,” replied the other; “ and would think my errand an unwise one if thou didst. But know I trust nothing to man in this matter: I shall make my steed awe the proud

king and his haughty nobles ; so let us forward on our way.” And abiding no farther questions, he moved rapidly towards London.

The moon was sinking in the west, as gaining the public way Sir Michael and his companion approached the city gate with the speed of two falcons in their flight through the morning air. They met an hundred horsemen ; their new velvet mantles, and their boots chained round their knees with gold, glittered as they moved beneath the light of an hundred torches. On a white palfrey rode a young creature of surpassing beauty ; her white hand held a bridle bitted with gold, and she rode with her eyes looking on the ground. Sir Michael, when he met this bridal procession, spoke not, neither did he return their salutations, nor bless the bride, nor nod to the bridegroom. He passed them ; and the moment that he passed them they all turned round and followed him, with their mantles glittering in jewelled clasps, and the bride still looking down.

Near the city gate they met four mutes on horseback bearing sable plumes ; the body of one of the princes of the land was laid on a bier and borne along on the backs of two black horses ; behind came two men carrying his helmet, his armour, and his sword, while three-score lords, knights, and gentlemen, followed in

cloaks of black velvet, and all looking on the ground sorrowful. Sir Michael passed them, and they all turned round, mutes, bier-bearers, and mourners, and followed him in silence.

When he came to the city gate, the astonished warders looked from the wall and said, “What a glorious sight; here comes the Scottish ambassador with two hundred nobles behind him; there is as much gold about their mantles as could ransom a prince; and he who leads them, is worthy of becoming an emperor. But here they cannot come; at this hour, the gates of London are never opened; and they will have an opportunity of comparing, as they ruminate in the green fields, the air of merry old England at midnight, with the cold moist breeze of Caledonia.” Sir Michael rode up to the gate, and setting an ivory horn to his lips, he sent forth such a sound that the towers tottered, the bolts started from their places, and the brazen gates went asunder with a crash which sounded all over the city.

Sir Michael rode onward; he met a train of priests; their white garments swept the ground; the shirts of some were of hair cloth, and others were of silk; some walked with pebbles in their shoes, others wore the softest wool and the finest leather. They all carried crucifixes, sanctified relics, images of saints, and waxen tapers, while,

bearing a pair of crutches, an old man, with a sinister expression of countenance, walked in the middle, and at every step he waved the crutches in the air, and the priests chaunted slowly a Latin song, of which the following is a faithful version :

THE PRIEST'S SONG.

I.

Saint George, he reigns in Westminster,
Saint Thomas reigns in Kent;
And every tower and town and hall
Its relic has, and saint;
But there 's a saint in London found,
Whose voice calls dead men from the ground.

II.

Saint David rules on Penman-mau†,
Saint Andrew o'er the border;
Saint Patrick on yon holy isle,
Keeps all its saints in order;
But there 's a saint in Crutched-Friars
Can brave the fiend and quench his fires.

III.

He looked; six bed-rid dames sprang up,
And leaped and danced like witches.
He spoke; six cripples sang, and made
Twelve crosses of their crutches.
He prayed; and in the charnel vault
Six corses made a summersault.

IV.

One glance but from his holy eye
Can turn sworn foes to brothers,
And charm to chasteness London town,
With its unmarried mothers.
He blessed an old man's limb of wood,
'Twas changed to flesh, and bone, and blood.

V.

To day they bore an alderman
Past to the city Spital ;
Ten thousand shouted, there he goes,
Slain with excess of victual.
The saint touched one who touched his shank,
He started up, and ate and drank.

VI.

Six millions of most beauteous souls,
Saint Patrick won from Dagon ;
'Twas both by prayer and push of pike,
Saint George subdued the dragon.
But London's saint clad in sack-cloth,
Works far more wonders than them both.

When the priests concluded their song of marvels, they all turned round with one accord, and followed Sir Michael. He met a young gallant close wrapt in his cloak of silk, a mask upon his face, and a sword by his side; he was within a dozen steps of the house of his mistress, and the moment of assignation was nigh. He turned round, and followed Sir Michael. He met one of the des-

peradoes of the day, who spilt blood without remorse for any man's money; his sword was hid beneath his cloak; his dagger was at his side; he had singled out his victim; was following close upon his steps, while his employer walked behind, with the price of blood in his hand, rejoicing in the coming moment of revenge. The hired and the hirer turned round and followed Sir Michael.

A thousand casements flew open, and gray-headed age, and bright-eyed youth, filled up the openings, and lay and gazed upon the strange procession. "Is it not a noble sight," said a veteran from the French wars, "to see so many nobles and knights clad in their mail of fine steel fastened with clasps of silver, and their banners displayed before them?" "There they go," exclaimed an ancient courtier, who projected his body anxiously from a window nigh Temple-bar; "there they go, all princes, and earls, and thrice belted knights. Their jewelled coronets glittering as they move; their mantles of rich velvet, loaded with golden net-work and embroidery, and their horses sweating under the weight of metal and gems. Never did so brave an embassy arrive in England." "From what land," said an earl's daughter, "have so many gallant knights and nobles come? how fairly they ride; how well their jewelled robes and

feathered bonnets become them ; and how will the hearts of the dames of Henry's court flutter to behold them." "Hear," said a minstrel of the court, who with his harp borne before him, his rich cloak carried behind him, and two armed men marching in front to clear the way, was hastening to the levee of a court favourite ; "hear," he said, "how divinely the minstrels of this embassy sing ; their voices are not of this land, nor are the words in which their feelings are embodied, belonging to old England ; yet the words are so much akin to this country, and the music so delicious, that I feel all their sweetness, variety, and strength. Saint George ! but the Bards of the Border still surpass those of the court.

Fast the rumour flew, that a strange ambassador with all his train had entered London by force, and was now on his way to Westminster abbey. Of the amount and quality of the strangers there were many rumours. "By Saint Edward !" exclaimed the Earl Marshal of England, "let there be one, or let there be an hundred ; let them be clad in Milan steel, or let them be sage and prudent counsellors wrapped in their furred mantles, with wisdom on their lips ; or let them be a crowd of shaveling priests, with relics, chaunting interminable anthems—and rumour has told this varied story—I shall meet them and beard them, be they

ever so bold." So saying he rode forward, accompanied by an hundred knights; but no splendid embassage met he. Sir Michael rode foremost, Sir James rode behind, and a weary and mingled multitude followed without order; young and old, peasant and noble, citizen and churl, for whomsoever he met followed him, nor had the knight himself a very imposing appearance.

"Saw ye ever such a sight, Sir George Beaumont?" said the Earl Marshal to a gallant knight who rode by his bridle-rein; "the city should be deprived of its charter, for allowing such a rabble to enter its gates. The fellow now who rides foremost with his coarse mantle, plumeless bonnet, and steed unshod, uncombed, and uncut, seems more of the make of a Border trooper, than an ambassador. Ho, Sir Churl," he said, addressing Sir Michael, "what savage land has the honour of being represented by one so mean and so unseemly? But why need I ask, Scotland, Scotland is written in your looks, your garb, and all your emblazonry; a country barren, cold, poor, and inhospitable." "Lord Earl," said Sir Michael, "thy surmise is as just as it is courteously expressed; but my message is not to thee, but to thy master, so move aside, and let us pass." The Earl Marshal laughed in scorn, and said, "Sir Scot, thou must disburthen thee of thy weighty message, even to one

so humble as the Earl Marshal of England. Had the Lord Mayor guarded his gates against mendicants, we had not been stayed in the street by the Scottish Ambassador. Thy message, I pray thee, thy message ? ”

Sir Michael rode close to the Earl Marshal and said, “ Thou wottest not what thou art doing, nor what thou art saying. Let me not, I pray thee, for as sure as Thames runs to the sea, and Henry rules and England obeys, I shall put thee and thy train aside as easily as a ship divides the water, or the wind moves withered grass ; and thy resistance may cost thee the soiling of thy velvet coat.” “ Back, base Scot ! ” exclaimed the other in wrath, “ else I shall strike thee with my truncheon. Back churl, back. Nay, if thou wilt have it, take it, in God’s name, and a blessing go with it ; ” and he struck a blow at Sir Michael, which seemed equal to the extinction of the life of any being of mortal mould. The truncheon descended full on him, the blow was heard to sound like the blow of a steel hammer falling on an anvil, and the iron truncheon flew from the grasp of the Earl, the whole width of the street. In a moment it was wafted into the hand of Sir Michael, who presented it to the owner, and said, “ You know not, Lord Earl, how to wield such a weapon as that. Take it, and use it more wisely.” “ Nay,” ex-

claimed the earl, as he looked on the truncheon, which was dinted, as if it had descended on something harder than case hardened steel, “if thou canst endure a blow from a staff full fifteen northern pounds in weight, thou mayest bide a dint from my sword ; it shall never be said that I struck a man a fair stroke and he fell not.” And he pulled out his sword as he spoke.

The horse of Sir Michael snorted when it saw the flashing of the blade, and the war-horses of the Earl Marshal and his knights swerved aside, and started off, as if a thunder bolt had fallen among them. Horse and man rolled over each other, and when they rose their war-saddles and mantles were befouled with mud ; the horses shuddered, and a strange fear seized all the knights. “Earl Marshal,” said Sir Michael, “this humility is beyond my wishes. I desired but leave to pass, and thy knights and thyself fall prostrate before me. It becomes not a simple knight of Scotland to see the proudest Earl of England on his knees, in a street which is none of the purest. Arise, and lead the way to the abbey gate.”

Slowly, and with pain the Earl Marshal arose, “Sir Scot,” he said haughtily, “thou speakest proud words, and thou hast seen what no man ever saw before, the Earl Marshal thrown from his horse like a youth who had not won his spurs. But

be assured no one to-night shall see King Henry's face, who wins not there by my permission. Arrest this Stranger, ye knights of my train, put iron on neck and limb, and to the dungeon with him." As their captain spoke, they rushed on Sir Michael and his companion, to seize them and bind them; but Sir Michael rode quietly through all impediments, down the middle of the street, followed by all who followed before, without further stay or molestation. "That Scot has a terrible arm," said one citizen to another; "sawest thou not how cleverly he set it at work?" "He has a more terrible horse," said the other; "fire comes from its nostrils, it treads on air, its neigh is like a trumpet's call, and it would rush through a stone-wall, were it well spurred to the charge; I would I had one of the same breed." "Drop on thy kness my son," said a pilgrim, gray with age, and leaning on a staff, "drop on thy knees, and pray God to release thee from thy rash wish. The rider is a wizard and the steed is an incarnate fiend." And the pilgrim sighed, and muttered prayers, as he went tottering away.

Sir Michael now approached the abbey, and the lofty and beautiful pile arose in all that obscure splendour which moonlight gives to a gothic structure. At the period of which we speak the abbey, a fabric of pure and unmixed gothic, seemed

the offspring of the soil, the production alike of the religion and the natural taste of the people. Its lofty spires, numerous buttresses and minarets, its carved doors and painted windows, through which light of a thousand dyes streamed, inspired awe in the beholder, and the steed of Sir Michael took a soberer pace, and its rider a more serious brow. Even the wild multitude who came rolling after him grew grave as they came, and it was not without awe that they heard a voice sing the following song; it seemed to come from the door of the abbey, to drop from middle air, and sometimes it sounded as if it came from the lips of Sir Michael himself:

OPEN WIDE, YE HOLY DOORS.

I.

Oh ! open wide, ye holy doors,
 Be opened fair and wide ;
 To one with more than monarch's might,
 And less than monarch's pride.
 Be opened wide ye holy doors,
 And let the pilgrim in ;
 Who comes with glory on his brow,
 And soul released from sin.

II.

Be opened wide, ye holy doors,
 Lo, here a pilgrim kneels ;
 Ye open wide to those who come
 With gold spurs on their heels.

Ye open wide to mitred heads,
And brows which bear a crown ;
But here comes one whose meanest word,
Can pluck your princes down.

III.

Be opened wide, ye holy doors,
For let the pilgrim call ;
Your bands shall melt like wax, and ye
Shall start against the wall.
Be opened wide ye holy doors,
For let the pilgrim cry,
Against ye, and your brazen bars,
Like to the chaff shall fly.

IV.

Be opened wide, ye holy doors,
For by the light aboon,
And by the stone on which bold Bruce
Was crowned at royal Scoon,
One comes to bid ye open wide,
Whose word could sweep ye far
From earth, nor leave one trace behind,
More than a shooting star.

V.

Be opened wide, ye holy doors,
Look on yon pilgrim well ;
No sandalled monk is he with beads,
And cross and scallop-shell.
To him some of that power is given,
That sent to Shinar's plain,
Confusion and the Red Sea stemmed,
And temple rent in twain.

When this wild chaunt concluded, the doors of the abbey flew against the walls, and a stream of light gushed out into the air, which illumined the loftiest towers, glimmered on the bosom of the Thames, and showed to the King and his nobles Sir Michael seated on his coal black steed, with his hands laid on his bosom.

CHAPTER X.

When I bestride him, I soar, I am a hawk ; he trots the air ; the earth sings when he touches it ; the basest horn of his hoof is more musical than the pipe of Hermes. He is the prince of palfreys : his neigh is like the bidding of a monarch, and his countenance enforces homage.

SHAKSPEARE.

KING Henry, with his warriors and nobles had hung the banners taken at Flodden over the high altar ; had returned thanks to the God of heaven, and all his saints, for the fortunate victory ; and had placed the supposed body of the Scottish monarch beneath a canopy of velvet at the foot of the altar, when they heard the clang of the massy doors, as they were flung against the wall. - The monarch looked for some time upon Sir Michael, as he sat in silence before the gate, his hands laid on his bosom, and submission and awe in his aspect. " What man may this be," inquired the king, " whose presence spreads fear and consternation among my people ; who has opened London gates like London's monarch, and foiled my stout Earl Marshal and all his people ? He seems but a churl, for he backs that gallant steed like one

who is not master of his seat. Go, and speak to him, my Lord Abbot; belike he may be some pilgrim, from a far land, with a few profitable relics. Be not close-handed with the holy man, for church miracles have not abounded in London of late."

The King returned into the abbey.

The Lord Abbot, a little round plump oily personage, bustled forward, with the united importance of church and state in his face. He advanced to the side of Sir Michael, and said, "What would my fair son? Comes he with tidings of weight from abroad, his holiness is infirm, and there will be a vacancy among the cardinals, which will be followed by a change of caps among the bishops, when our deservings may be remembered. Or has our son been in Palestine, and returned with a blessed relic from the holy mountain or the sacred tomb, which he wishes to lay on the shrine of our blessed saint, Edward the Confessor?" "Abbot," said Sir Michael, hastily, "I am no messenger from mother church, nor a pilgrim with the newest relics. I am ambassador from the Scottish King, and am come to speak to King Henry. So lead the way, monk."

"Fair son," said the abbot, "thou speakest irreverently to one who has some rule in the church; but we pass that—a sinful man may be spoken to in a simple way. But thou wilt have

the modesty to assume a less startling title than ambassador, seeing thou hast neglected the necessary pomp of such a plenipotentiary ; thou art without attendants, save one simple groom ; nor dost thou bear on thy person the external tokens of one who is trusted with the ear of princes." " Thou art a reader of faces then, monk," said Sir Michael ; " a wise man, who, by fasting, and penance, and long prayers, and humbling of the body in coarse garments, has acquired the gift of foreknowledge. Wottest thou now of the change which awaits this golden hive of thine ? If thou wouldest fain know, look through this little glass—a glance may be a lesson to thee—thou wilt see what is fore-ordained, and will surely come to pass."

The abbot took a small glass from the hand of Sir Michael, and, turning to the abbey, looked for a moment on the building. " My son," he said, " this glass of thine is the work of a false prophet ; and he who made it, and he who believes in its truth, shall surely die." He took another look, and his face became flushed. " The vision is still the same—the robe is plucked from the monk, the saint is torn from his niche, the crucifix is trampled under foot, and the holy relics are cast to the street like the bones of dogs. Thy glass shall be burnt, and thou shalt be slain, my son." And he hurried into the abbey, crying, " Ho !

brother Ambrose, brother Soulis, brother Bankes, and brother Andrews, here is a most pestilent heretic ! Bring red-hot pincers and scalding oil, bring the iron boots, and the sword called the mercy of God. The smell of a suffering heretic is savoury in the nostrils of one of the true church." And a multitude of monks flocked round their superior, for the word heretic called them in swarms from their cells, like bees at casting time.

" What ails our good abbot," inquired the king; " this man at the gate cannot be come from Rome to strip him of his dignity, and wear his cap in his stead." " What ails me, my liege ? much ails me," exclaimed the churchman. " This land, under your mild and merciful rule, is become the hotbed of heresy ; and here comes a Scottish churl, who, under pretence of bearing a message to your majesty, has insulted the dignity of our saints and our relics. He shall die ! I swear it by the Confessor's dust, and by Becket's bones," " He will die no doubt, my good Abbot," said the king mildly, " but by burning a Scot you will not establish the belief in things holy. This pious matter has been pushed too boldly of late ; my lieges, Sir Monk, have discovered certain errors in the lives of the sons of the church, and their faith has been shrewdly shaken ; but we shall

hear what this rustic ambassador has to say. We wot well that our late cousin's land abounds not in riches, so we shall excuse the want of diplomatic splendour. Let him come into the presence. Go, Sir Ralph Beaumont, and Sir Edmund Mauley, and do the devoir of our court to this singular ambassador."

The two knights went, and the scene presented to their sight was unexpected and dazzling. The groves of trees seemed hung with cloth of gold and the richest tapestry, forming an avenue, in which stood ranks of nobles and knights, their pennons streaming to the wind, and their armour glittering to the torches. At the head of this remarkable embassy sat Sir Michael himself, the same calm silent being he had first presented himself. The two knights bowed; and Sir Ralph Beaumont said, "Will my lord ambassador choose to alight? His majesty will give him an audience for a moment now, and on the morrow hearken to what he has to propose from the infant King of Scotland." "Sir Ralph," said the other, "you speak like a wise and prudent knight, but this matter may not be as you propose. I must be gone to-night, and his majesty must indulge me, by hearing what I have to say on horseback."

Sir Ralph Beaumont gazed on the ambassador, and exclaimed, "By the glory of England, Sir

Ambassador, you must find some more courteous message for the ear of his majesty; I should do thee and thy land much wrong, did I become the bearer of such a wild request. Demean thyself, I pray thee, as becomes thy country's fortunes."

"I demean myself according to both, Sir Ralph," said Sir Michael, "and before I depart thou shalt thyself acknowledge that my words become well the powers which I possess. How now, Monk of Westminster! the historical glance which thou hadst of thy church's fortunes, has not increased thy humility. What wantest thou now?"

The lord abbot, to whom these concluding words were addressed, came accompanied by a swarm of the functionaries of his establishment, whose employment was the extermination of sorcery, magic, and heresy, from the land; they came laden with the arguments which the strong use against the weak, and which the church of Rome used in defending herself against all who came with reason and scripture to confront her in her strong holds. The monks held up their nameless instruments of torture, as their superior waved his hand; and Sir Michael saw without emotion, and the two English knights with mingled fear and curiosity, a vast array of pincers, racks, iron boots, and all manner of instruments of conversion and conviction, which the cruelty of Spain,

or the cunning of Italy, provided in aid of the true belief. "My fair son," said the abbot, laying his hand on Sir Michael's knee, in order that he might at once point out his victim and secure it, "my fair son, the church, out of reverent care for thy person, and love for thy soul, wills it that thou shouldst accompany us into our secret chamber, that the truths of our holy belief, and the traditions of our mother church, together with the merciful doctrines of the fathers, should all be revealed unto thee; so come, my fair son." And turning to his followers, he said, "Lay hands on him, my children, and see that he escape not; in sympathy for his soul, we must constrain his body. Bring him after me into Saint Thomas's chamber."

The temporal and spiritual assistants of the worthy abbot advanced to seize him; a new and unexpected obstacle interposed itself, which confounded all their practical acuteness in singling out victims for the church. "Father Ambrose," exclaimed one of his companions, who carried a couple of steel collars, with thumb-screws in his left hand, "there are two delinquents, so like in form, and in look, that I know not which is which: canst thou tell me how to determine?" "A miracle! a miracle!" cried father Ambrose; "the saints are kind to their church: they have sent us two pestilent heretics to admonish, so

bring them both along." " My Lord Abbot named only one ; and thou knowest," whispered a monk, how little thanks he rendered us for leading the two fair ladies of Lambeth to the stake. We ought to have reserved a moiety for the private use of the church." " Thou sayest truth, brother Bankes," said Ambrose, " so bring the one next thee along. Nay, lay thy hands mercifully upon him, seeing that he is a meek and considerate youth." And pulling from his horse, and dragging into the abbey, a figure in every respect bearing the form and impress of Sir Michael, the monks entered, singing an anthem in praise of mercy and loving-kindness, as they marched along; partly because it was habitual, and partly because it served to drown whatever cries their victim might utter. The captive went quietly and silently, and was placed without resistance in the chair of accusation.

The abbot and his sanctified comrades are possessed," said Sir Ralph Beaumont; " they are setting up their throats, and pouring out a thundering hymn of rejoicing, in the belief that our heretical ambassador here is delivered up to the loyng kindness of the church. But come, Sir Ambassador, either alight and kneel to our monarch, or turn thy bridle about, and ride northward again." " Peace !" said Sir Edmund Mauley,

“ here comes our gracious king, and chiding in his face too.” “ Dilatory varlets !” exclaimed King Henry, as he came forward, his long velvet robe borne up by twelve noble youths, and some of the chiefs of his household on his right hand and left, “ did I not bid you usher the ambassador of our neighbour kingdom into our presence, and here you stand looking on a northern churl, sorrily mounted, with a ragged rabble behind him.”

“ May it please you, sire,” said Sir Ralph Beaumont, “ the person before you is the ambassador of whom you speak ; he will inform your majesty of the reasons which induced him to decline delivering his message according to our request.” “ What !” exclaimed the king, dragging the train of his robe from the youthful trainbearers as he spoke, and fixing his kindling glance on the face of Sir Michael, “ callest thou thyself ambassador ? Return to thy child-king and thy discomfited people, and say, Henry of England receives princes as suppliants, and nobles as ambassadors—never peasants. Begone ! else thy insolent head shall be found within an hour on Temple gate.” “ Most merciful prince and most wise monarch,” said Sir Robert Carew, one of his counsellors, interposing, “ the eyes of your servant see differently in this matter : in this man’s look there is dignity stamped ; and the nobles and knights who form

his train fill all the royal grove from hence to Hungerford-stairs." "My eyes see a different and more terrible sight," said another courtier; "the whole grove and park are crowded thick with bonnet and plume, and war-axe and spear; and this warrior, who rides at their head, seems one who can lead wisely, and fight well." "I see not," said the king's chaplain, "with the eyes of these two servants of an earthly prince, I see a holy procession of devout men, bearing before them the sacred relics and consecrated symbols of our church; and I behold in the distance the piled up fagots, the lighted torch, and the bound heretic."

"The holy priest sees what he wishes to see, and my two counsellors see each according to his own character. Henry Tudor only sees an uncourtly churl, and as such he will treat him. Hear me, Sir Ambassador: return to your king in the swaddling band, with his diminished court, and say, Henry of England converses not with the churle, but with the nobles of Scotland." Sir Michael fixed his eye on the king, and said, "Bethink you well what you do, King Harry Tudor: I am the representative of a warlike people, and a fiery message may cost thee another invasion."

"By the forehead of heaven!" exclaimed the king, "thou art an overbold peasant; yet we like

thy threat. Another invasion ! I have the goshawk in keeping, which stooped among your doves on Flodden. Henry Howard, art thou alarmed for this new Scottish war ? ” “ The Scots,” answered the warlike courtier, “ are good warriors, and when the battle closes they thrust a good lance, and strike a good stroke. It is a pleasure to meet with men who fight it out to the last, and who never run whilst hope remains.” “ God’s glory, man ! ” cried King Henry, “ thou art become a Scot thyself; the people whom thou hast beaten, with their bravest at their head, may be beaten again. I wot not what has hitherto hindered England from extending her dominion to John-o’-Groats.” “ I shall tell thee,” said Sir Michael, “ England, with her most warlike kings to lead her, was unable to do more than overrun our land: think on Stirling-bridge, Roslin-lea, and Bannock-brook. A firm heart, and determined hand, have saved Scotland, and will save her, till she gives England a monarch.”

King Henry laughed in scorn, and said, “ Be gone, Sir Peasant, and tell your boy-king from me, that I am coming with my English yeomen to turn his barren inheritance into a hunting-field.” “ The Prince of Scotland,” answered Sir Michael, “ having been informed that such was your gracious intention, desired me to say, that he would

have his hounds ready to meet you on the marches. He bade me too put into your royal hand a horn, a single blast of which will arouse you some gallant game, which the fleetest hound of the royal pack will hardly pull down." So saying, he took from his pocket a little horn, of ivory and gold, and presented it to King Henry. The monarch took the horn, and looked for a moment on the characters which were chased in the ivory, then set it to his lips, and blew a blast.

As the sound spread, there appeared to the eyes of the king a forest of tall trees. Through among their shafts was heard a wild cry, and in a moment there burst from the greenwood seven swart hounds, their eyes seemed living fire, and their mouths were dyed with blood. They followed a deer at full speed. "I swear by my sceptre," said the king, "that I never saw such gallant hounds. How they devour the way, how dark is their hue, and how huge are their limbs, and how fierce their eyes." The English nobles strained their eyes, looked as the king looked, and though they saw nothing of the vision which appeared to their monarch, yet as good courtiers, they thought it prudent to see what the king saw, and accordingly several exclaimed, "How dark of hue, huge of limb, fierce of eye. Saint George and Saint David to boot, but they are gallant hounds."

"King Harry Tudor," said Sir Michael, "these hounds are fleeter than the shooting star, yet the game they follow, will they never overtake. That little horn has called up a vision, for thy contemplation, profit by it, Sir King, to few is such a vision shown, but more direful will thy doom be, if thou seest and shuttest thy heart against such instruction." King Henry still stood and gazed, the greenwood gradually faded away, the forms of the seven hounds grew fainter; their eager cry for blood became more distant, nature gradually resumed her empire, and the rolling river, the illuminated city, and the lofty abbey, returned to his sight, and he said, "What may the meaning be?"

"Those seven hounds," answered Sir Michael, "are the spirits of seven evil men, whose ambition knew no bounds, and who sported with the lives of human beings, even as the hound with the hare. They coveted rule which did not belong to them, and they deluged France, and Scotland, and Wales, with blood, from the mere love of spilling it. I shall not name them, they were of this island, and most of them were kings. Such was their ambition, and such is their punishment, their spirits are transferred into hounds, howling with eternal hunger and thirst, doomed to chase a fiend whom

they can never overtake. As they are now, so will they be to the day of doom."

"Sorcerer," exclaimed the monarch, "think not that King Henry will allow thee to escape; thou hast violated the hallowed tomb, and animated the dust of our greatest monarchs, to give them as a sport to fiends of perdition. There are laws for punishing such, and thou wilt find those speedily who can give them full effect." "Chafe not, sire," replied Sir Michael, "nor imagine punishments which thou hast not power to inflict. I am no sorcerer, but one of a purer calling; one who can rival the most consummate members of the priesthood in the performance of miraculous things. To me rather than to them is given the power of rebuking pride into humility; and Warwick himself was not half such a setter up and puller down of princes. Call all your priests, your abbots, your manufacturers of miracles, your dealers in relics real and apocryphal, and let them show you a vision such as mine. I have shown the present, behold the future; there in that glass may the monarch of England see the end of his house's glory."

Henry could not choose but to look, his brow of scorn was instantly exchanged for one of deep and melancholy thought; he saw the chief events of his son and daughter's reigns passing rapidly on

as he looked ; scaffolds streaming with the blood of queens, with the blood of subjects ; and his stern and childless daughter dying in her chair, while her crown was plucked away by a foreign hand. Henry clasped his hands together, and exclaimed, “ More, show me more, what presumptuous hand is that which steals England’s royal crown.” “ That thou canst not know,” said Sir Michael, “ call thy chief priests, thy men who make church legends, and work imaginary miracles, and let them tell thee, if they can.” “ Alas ! ” said the king, “ the miracles which my devout monks work, are such that they extend neither my kingdom nor my knowledge. Some crippled churl will they make whole ; to some childless lady will they find an heir ; they will bring down rain on the church lands when it descends no where else, and they will gather two kinds of fruit from one tree. But they will not condescend to work more meritorious miracles, and as for giving me a true history of future events, Saint Edward ! I wish they would give me an accurate one, Sir Scot, of matters which happen before their eyes.”

A loud outcry from the interior of the abbey startled the king and his courtiers ; the abbot and his monks came rushing along the aisle, which, wide as it was, seemed too narrow to contain them ; they came with horror in their looks, sweat on their

brows, and a wild tale on their tongues. “ He is no Scot, but Satan himself ; I swear it by Becket’s bloody stone, and by all that remains of the true cross,” exclaimed one monk. “ He is seven evil spirits in one,” exclaimed a second, “ he has as many shapes at command, as our dean has suits of apparel.” “ Run, brother Bankes,” cried a third, “ and bring seven drops of the dew which Saint Wyvile gathered on Mount Hermon ; bring a cinder of the coals which consumed Saint Lawrence ; the stone that whetted the knife that flayed Saint Bartholomew ; a salmon scale from the miraculous draught ; a——” “ Peace, brother Micah,” exclaimed a fourth, “ I vow to inflict on my body thirteen hundred and thirty and three stripes, with a thong cut from a wild ass’s back, to sit on my bare knees on the cold stone of the Confessor’s tomb from midnight to sun rise, if this pest will be removed.” “ It is done, it is done,” shouted fifty monks at once, “ blessed be the good Father Wal-ton, for his atonement is accepted.”

“ Priests,” inquired King Henry, “ what is all this wild outcry about ; cannot you deal with heresy without claumering amid your pleasures, and telling all the city and the court that a dead heretic is acceptable in your eyes.” “ My liege lord,” said the abbot, “ a thing more terrible hath taken place than is to be found in any of the

Church legends since the time that the miraculous dew fell on the camp of Offa's Saxons, when seventeen thousand heathens lay down to sleep, and all awoke baptized. There came a man to our gate, a sorcerer, who dealt in magic, one of those for whom the church hath proposed a merciful punishment, by disjointing their bones on the rack, tearing their limbs with red hot pincers, pouring boiling oil into the wounds, and finally breaking their bodies on an iron cross. The servants of the Church seized him, carried him into our private cell of conference, and placed him on the wheel, in order that the pain of the body might bring repentance to the soul. Down he sat, a youthful man with a grave aspect, but with the first movement of the wheel he was a man no longer.” A strong fit of shuddering interrupted the Abbot in his speech; one of his brethren took up the dropt thread of the story.

“ He was a man no longer but an incarnate fiend with cloven feet and saucer eyes, a whole forest of horns on his head. He gave one wild yell, and the teeth dropt out of the iron wheel like ripe nuts. I held the blessed cord in my hands with which St. Dunstan scourged the devil, and I sought to bind him, but he snapt it in twain, and disappeared. And I thought he was gone, but on looking around I saw a wild fire flashing about the cell, and threw holy water on it, when up sprang a little brown elf

with long hairy fingers." "It became a devil of a brown complexion," said another monk, taking up the legend, "and groaned, and chattered, and pattered with its fingers, like one telling beads. And I seized him with a pair of red hot tongs—things mainly useful in the management of all manner of heresies; so I seized him as I said, and he yelled and bestowed on me such a buffet, that I fell and saw him no more for a time." "He fell, and we saw him no more for a time," said a fourth monk. "Then I called on the aid of the saints, and adventured to grapple with him, and I felt something in my arms, like the form of a young damsel, and a dimness came over my sight, and my knees shook, and my limbs failed, and I fell by the side of brother Killavie."

"Sire," exclaimed a fifth monk, "the most marvellous part of the story is yet untold. In the arms of my brother he turned into a fair dame; but he felt in mine like an armful of thorns, still I held him fast; then he became like the whole folio works of the fathers descending upon me, and I was nearly overwhelmed; still I held him fast; next he turned into a cardinal's robe and cap; I kept a resolute hold; and finally he became the blessed form of our prioress; and as I gazed upon her whom I knew so well, he became a skeleton; I threw him from me, the bones rattled as they fell, and the

fiend laughed till the vault re-echoed, and we saw him no more; only he has left behind him an odour so strong that all our holy essences will scarcely subdue it.

"Monks! by my faith," said King Henry, "you have added another good legend to the stores of the church. All who love a curious tale will love my priests of Westminster. We, too, have had our share of marvels; and may have more; he who can bring strange things to pass still sits before me, and I think his very presence enchanteth me; for here, contrary to all precedent and court etiquette, I stand while my city is turned into a hunting-park, and this holy abbey into a den for the fiends to sport in with the priests." "Sire," said the Abbot, "may I request the singular honour of being allowed to entertain this northern stranger in my Abbey for one night, till your Majesty may desire a conference with him. I would fain converse with him on the delusions of learning, on the folly of knowledge, on the vanity of letters, on the frivolity of science, and the sinfulness of working wonders by other means than by relics, by prayer, and by faith." "I think, Monk," said the King, "there is wisdom in thy request. Thou wilt admonish this stranger by means of very intelligible instruments. The rack, the wheel, the boiling oil, the burning pincers, and the screws are all ready to assist thee in

thy argument; truly, Monk, I shall pleasure thee in this little matter."

"King Henry," said Sir Michael, "a king's face should give grace, and thine only sanctions the will of this cunning priest. But if such be thy will thou wilt surely exact a promise from the Abbot, that he will not injure the person of an Ambassador. Let his weapons of argument or conversion be strictly theological." "Priest," said the king, "you hear the wish of the Scot; how say you, will you war against him only with words? I am no friend to truths and confessions extracted by iron weapons." "Sire," replied the Abbot, "your Majesty speaks like one of the profane laity. To the church is given the power of converting the heathen—of combating unbelief—of rooting out heresies, and working out man's salvation; and whatever weapons she uses in this pious warfare, are therefore weapons from the armoury of the saints. Through the aid of St. Thomas, I shall entertain this stranger in such sort that he will while he lives remember the Abbot of Westminster."

"Abbot," answered Sir Michael, "I shall not put thy hospitality to the proof, nor thy church in peril, by becoming its lodger. Let me give thee fair warning. The time is nigh when the darkness of thy secret cells shall be as light as day; when thy holiest relics, and thy engines of torture, shall

be shewn to the wondering and hissing world ; when the nakedness of thy demurest daughters shall be seen by the vulgar multitude, and the king and the nobles who now stand by thy side, shall point the finger in mockery, and regard thee no more than they would an adder whose sting is plucked out." "Audacious Scot," said the Abbot, "how darest thou talk thus ? thou shalt be stript and scourged through London streets. I swear it by the brazen toe of St. Peter at Rome—by Becket's rib-bone—and by a portion of the true net which caught the miraculous draught of fishes."

"Sir Monk," said King Henry, "we must not soil pure hands in this foul matter. The Scot, be he ambassador or not, has observed none of the forms which regulate intercourse between nations ; I therefore hold him unworthy of my confidence, and order him to return to his own land, and there abide the coming of my ambassador, who with fifty thousand stout soldiers at his back, shall teach Scotland that King Henry resents this idle mockery." "Sire," said Sir Philip Mordaunt, "the Scot is royally attended, he has nobles and knights without number in his train ; and though I know not his name, he has proved himself a tried warrior, by foiling the Earl Marshal and an hundred knights, who opposed his coming." Loud laughed King Henry, and exclaimed, "By the light

of heaven, Sir Philip, did I not know thee to be both sage in council and bold in the field, I should imagine thee weak in judgment and fearful in war. Nobles and knights ! rooks and daws ! whom seest thou before thee ? but a mean person, a man of low degree, and it shall be my business to direct his steps northward, and that right speedily. Sir Ambassador get thee gone, else I shall whip thee through London, in spite of all the imaginary retinue which Sir Philip has given thee."

"Thou actest unlike a monarch in this matter," said Sir Michael, "I am a free man of a free country, and claim, as such, an exemption from stripes or bondage. But it is enough; thou wilt hearken neither to my own words, nor to those of my mission, so farewell ; but before I depart thou shalt judge if I be a fit person or no. For myself shall I not say one word ; when my good steed has stamped thrice I shall begone."

As he ceased, the horse on which he sat stamped fiercely with one of his forefeet. The ground trembled; the houses shook; the bells of the Abbey rang; and the trees of the park waved to and fro like corn caught in a whirlwind. The courtiers gazed wildly on the king; the king gazed wildly on his courtiers; the Abbot prayed earnestly and loud, and the Monks told their beads with a rapidity quickened by fear. "Sir Abbot," said the king,

"wilt thou allow this knave to pull thy abbey about thy ears—canst thou not stay him? What is the use of thee and thy miracles, if thou canst not do a kind act when the hour of need is come?" "Sire," answered the Abbot, "over this man we have no power; his might comes not from the place over which we exercise controul. He is not the slave of Satan like the sorcerers of old, but Satan is his slave, and power has been given to him for a time." "Sir Abbot, thou art a dreamer like Sir Philip Mordaunt," exclaimed the king, "and being something of a dealer in profitable marvels thyself, thou hast a wish to maintain the reputation of the trade. Come, Sir Ambassador begone; we have no more time to waste thus unprofitably."

Sir Michael uttered not a word, but his horse gave a second stamp on the ground, and the ground quaked, as if it would have gaped and swallowed up the abbey, with all it contained; the trees were scattered like reeds, the Thames ran backward many a mile, and as much of London wall was thrown to the ground as would have served six thousand men to have marched into the city abreast, with banners displayed. King Henry crossed himself, and muttered a prayer; Sir Philip Mordaunt drew his sword, and struck at the horse of Sir Michael; the blade seemed to divide it in two, and descending, made an impression on the

stones of the street; but the animal still stood, and Sir Michael sat composedly on its back, and it lifted its hoof to give the third stamp, when King Henry cried, with a loud voice, “ Stay, Sir Ambassador, stay ! let thy steed set down its terrible hoof in peace, and be thine what boon thou wilst.”

Sir Michael folded his arms over his bosom, and said, “ It is well, Harry Tudor, else the third stamp of my horse would have made London into a lake.” The animal, as he spoke, tossed its flowing mane, from which lightning seemed to stream, gave a snort, which made the ground quiver, and set down its foot with slow and reluctant gentleness. “ See,” said Sir Michael, “ how unwillingly my steed keeps truce : it is not fear of thee, Sir King, and all thy court, which has made peace between us, for I have the power to trample thee and thy mightiest to dust. Hearken ! for this is my boon : be gentle with thy captives ; be kind to thy youthful kinsman, the Monarch of Scotland ; keep good rule on the Marches ; use not thy strength to his injury ; and cast that body, covered with a costly pall, into a common grave : he was a good soldier, and fought well and bravely—he was a vassal, but not a king.”

“ Thy boon is granted, Sir Ambassador,” said

King Henry : I shall use the might of my kingdom mercifully ; and Scotland, and its infant prince, shall not be stricken, unless they strike. But this, I say, is the body of the King of Scotland ; what token hast thou to shew me that it is a subject, and not a prince." " A token true," replied Sir Michael ; look there!" As he waved his hand, the steed of Sir James stood abreast of that of Sir Michael. The King of England and the Earl Howard started back, exclaiming both at once, " James Stuart the king! " and certainly the figure which was before them vindicated their exclamation. He wore a crown of gold above his helmet ; a velvet mantle, flowered with golden thistles, fell from his shoulder, over his left knee ; a sword was in his hand ; and that martial fire shone in his eyes which lightened up his form with heroism, as the sun lights the morning air. It was but the vision of a moment. Sir Michael turned his horse round, and said, " Mount, evil one, and fly;" and, as he spoke, the steeds vanished from their places, and no one saw whither they went.

CHAPTER XI.

The moon looked out with all her stars,
The ship moved merrily on,
Until she came to a castle high,
That all as diamonds shone.
On every tower there streamed a light,
On the middle tower shone three ;
Move for that tower, my mariners a',
My love keeps watch for me.

SCOTTISH SONG.

THE morning was growing into a silver gray on the eastern mountain tops, when Sir Michael and his companion halted their horses on a wild shore, against which the waves of the sea tumbled in multitudes, filling all the air with a moist salt spray. The water-fowl sat in flocks along the line of shells which separated the tide from the solid ground; the wreck of a ship was visible amid the broken lines of foam, which were agitated by a reef of rocks and sand; while a vessel, with all her sails set, and her mariners on board, sailed away with a snoring breeze, and a moist sheet, into the boundless sea. On one side stood the remains of an ancient castle, which from a lofty rock over-

looked the sea that murmured many a fathom below, while its shattered summit was jointly occupied by land and water fowl; and, on the other side, the sea rolled in a deep and romantic bay, which, fringed with woods and rocks, and filled with sea-cormorants and gulls, showed that man was seldom present to disturb its solitude, or remark its beauty.

Sir Michael and Sir James leaped from their horses, and the animals, released from their riders, neighed wildly, shook their dishevelled manes in the morning air, and dashing at once into the foaming surf, swam for the other side of the bay. They stood and looked on them, as with heads uplifted above the tide, and tails stretched dark amid the foam they darted through the water; and they saw a hag, bent with years, hastening as fast as her weakness allowed her to the water edge. "Now," said Sir Michael, "I promised to reveal the wonders of the world for your instruction and use. Look on that creature, sore subdued by time, covered with coarse raiment, dwelling by herself in a lonesome house, without a friend in the world, and seemingly suffering at once from old age and misery, yet she knows all the mysteries of the invisible kingdom of the fallen angels on earth. See! she knows that there are spirits in the bay, and is about to avail herself of the cir-

cumstance. Did she know that one sees her, who can turn her skill to his own advantage, she would display her art more privily.”.

She wet her left foot in the surge, dipped in her withered hands, and threw water into the morning air. The two animals had nearly gained the other side, when one was suddenly deprived of strength, floated rather than swam, and uttered a faint cry, like a creature in pain. She then took up two sea-shells, held them to her ears like a curious child, breathed upon them, and threw them into the bay. In a moment the sea rose into ridges, a wild wind was awakened upon the water, a murky cloud descended upon shore and bay, and nought was heard for the space of several minutes, save the rushing of the agitated water upon rock and sward. “Now,” said Sir Michael, “your steed is become, in the poetic language of the Norse rhymers, a dark rider of the wave; over mine she had no power; and when the cloud is cleared off, you will behold a fair vessel on the flood, instead of your gallant horse.” As he spoke the cloud dissolved away, the old tower, the waving woods, and the wide sea, were revealed at once, and the growing light of the morning tinged the summits of hill and wave with silver, as far as the eye could see.

“Behold,” said Sir James, “a glorious vessel,

her masts gleam like silver, her sails rustle like silk, and the figure which leans from her prow seems like melted gold; nor lacks she armed men, nor merry mariners. She has sprung from the bottom of the sea; for the bay was tenanted only by the sea-mew when the cloud dropped down."

"She has not sprung from the sea-brine," said Sir Michael, "but her origin is equally wonderful. I must confound this hag, and all her spells." He blew a low note on his ivory horn, and Brunelfin stood before him. "I thank thee," he said, "for thy service in London, for thy pleasant pranks among the monks. Look on yon foul hag. See! she holds her lean yellow arm over the sea, and yon fair ship, of her own shaping, will take her on board. Her skill was unequal to such a creation, had I not used the same materials before. Go; dissolve the spell which transformed the spirit-steed into a ship; win thy way to her confidence, by what wiles thou wilt; visit her enchanted isle, where her fair daughter dwells; dissolve the enchantment, and win the maid with the fairy-harp. Go—fly! Why lingerest thou?"

"Master," said Brunelfin, "my practice has been hitherto on land, and I have no desire to go down to see the wonders of the lower empire in the great deep. Yon dame has skill, which will do me some annoy; and power, which I am too

weak to resist. Did she not turn the prior of Saint Botolph into a fox, and hunt him to death with a pack of infernal hounds? Did she not clothe a loathly skeleton with flesh and blood, and endow it with youth and beauty; paint its cheeks with the rose, and its neck with the lily; and give witchery to its eye, and eloquence to its tongue, to allure the abbot of Saint Austen from the paths of purity and holiness? And did she not make a page out of the Norway pine to the lord of Lanercross, a creature as nimble as water, and as wanton as the wind, which rolled like a ball of fire under the feet of the father confessor, as he retired from the chamber of my lady, and made the good man confess such follies, as set all the vale of Derwent in wonder? I shall be made into a will-o'-wisp, and have to give light among the lakes and mosses till doomsday."

"Elf," said Sir Michael, "art thou not more afraid of incensing thy master than of angering a hag? I will enclose thee like a toad in a bed of solid stone; freeze thee into the middle of a mountain of untrodden snow, within cry of the pole; fix thee up as a sea-mark in a new voyage of discovery; throw thee mid-sky height, where thou wilt fly round and round the world like an owl from this to doomsday." "Master! master!" cried he, "I will do your bidding, be it what it

will." He flew to the line where land and water met, and taking up a shell from the surf, set it on the tide, turned it thrice about, and away it darted, expanding as it flew, till it became as large as a shallop. Sir James wondered to observe the rapid growth of this new prodigy, which still retained much of its original elegance of form, and glowed with the varied hues with which nature has so exquisitely dyed many of her marine productions. But his skill stopped not here; he knew that to the witch's sight his work to deceive her must seem her own, and for that purpose he placed lofty masts, clothed them with sails, filled the decks with mariners, and caused the waters to sing around her as she went. The hag shouted for joy when she saw the visionary shallop approach, through a column of mist, which now hovered on the bosom of the bay. She clapped her hands, and cried, "Come, my fair shallop, come!—three-score years and ten have I served the great spirit which rules the wind and waters, and never till now did he vouchsafe to sanction the spell of his poor hand-maid. Ah! many a gallant career have I taken on land, but on the billows have I never yet set a foot. How I long to be treading over their foamy heads, and roaming at large on their wilderness of waters." She could contain her joy no longer, but burst into voluntary song, till wood and bay re-echoed.

THE MAGIC SHALLOP.

I.

O shallop, fair shallop, no storm shall thee wreck,
No wind strain thy mainmast, no foam stain thy deck ;
The thunder shall pass thee, the lightning shall shine
As a lamp, but to light thee thy way on the brine.

II.

Thy planks never grew in the wilderness dun,
The hemp of thy sheets never shone in the sun ;
The wild hawk envies thee careering so fast,
And the moon takes delight for to shine on thy mast.

III.

All skaithless thou sail'st when the battle is hot,
Regardless of boarding-spear, powder, and shot ;
And he who can daunt thee with terror of wars,
May shoot down a sunbeam, and sink all the stars.

IV.

Like the wind for its speed, like the fowl for its flight,
The thunder for strength, and the tempest for might ;
Through the battle ye float, midst the tempest ye live,
There's a glory about ye which man cannot give.

As she sung, the imaginary vessel came landward ; its sails glittered in the dewy wind, and its ornamented prow ploughed the sand at her feet. She laid her withered hands upon it, and went on board, crying, “ Up, my merry mariners, give your sails to the breeze, there's good wine in

France and Portugal, and I shall make ye all to skip and sing." Her visionary mariners seemed all to shout, and Brunelfin, like an ancient seaman, came and thus received her commands. " You are a creature not of heaven's making, but of mine; one glance of my eye, one wave of my hand, or one stamp of my foot, and your lease of existence expires. Hearken ! The ship in which we ride can neither be sunk by an enemy, destroyed by the storm, nor consumed by fire. It is not, however, immortal, and should ye, when ye behold any thing strange or wonderful, exclaim in the simple language of mere mortals, claiming the aid of the saints, or the care of heaven, the planks on which we stand will melt like snow when it falls in the water."

" Lady," said Brunelfin, " fear not the saints. I believe not in them, let us to sea fearlessly ; the wines of Brabant, the pine apples of the west, the pearls and gold of the east, and the diamonds of the south, shall all be ours before the moon rises." " Slave," she said, " and creature of mine own making, be silent, and mind my words, else I shall turn thee into a sea-mew to make the rocks echo to all eternity with the clang of thy idle wings. Go spread thy sails to the wind, run thy ship right onward from the bay ; shouldst thou see any other ship, alter not thy course, but run on thy

career, and let vessels built by man's presumptuous hands, beware how they cross the course or hazard an encounter with my spell-built barge." As she spoke the shallop darted out of the bay with the rapidity of a flash of lightning.

The first ship which she saw was one bound for the Thames, a laborious trader, whose captain had carried out beads, looking-glasses, nails, and two-penny trinkets to the wondering savages of the new discovered isles, and now came home laden to the water's edge with the riches of the earth. The magic vessel struck her right midships, and severed her in two, and the sea was covered for many a rood with silks and spices—with shivered spars and drowning mariners. "There," said the Hag, "let them wallow and sprawl, and drink the salt sea brine; it is good enough for them. I asked her captain, when he sailed away, if he would buy a full sea and fair wind. A tar tree, and a torch for thee, beldame, quoth he; there he flutters who mocked my might." Her vessel sailed on.

Another ship appeared. Its pennon was glittering in the sun, the decks were filled with armed men, and the captain stood on the prow with a helmet on his head, and lance in his hand. "He has reigned king of the ocean these seven years," said Brunelfin; "he has spoiled alike Turk and Christian, the high and the low, the weak woman.

and the strong man. Shall I smite him in twain, or sink him at once?" "Slave," said the dame, "wilt thou harm an innocent mariner, who wins his bread by the strength of his own right arm, and the sharpness of his sword? Let him pass on, and wish him speed on his voyage." "This self-willed ship of yours," exclaimed Brunelfin, "will not be ruled by me, and unless you can stay her by a spell, she will shear the pirate as cleverly in two as ever he clefth the skull of innocent childhood, or unresisting age." She lifted her staff, and moved it rapidly in the air, but the ship continued its course, and striking the corsair, clave the ship in two, and passed onward, leaving a shriek and a bubble behind her.

The dame struck her staff on the deck, and exclaimed, "Oh thou piece of sinful timber, thou hast not fulfilled the will of thy mistress, and thou art no longer worthy of being held in her right hand. On the grave of a murderer didst thou grow; a spiller of blood came and hanged himself amongst thy branches. At the full of the moon did I cut thee, and the knife with which I pruned thee was taken from the right hand of one who had dyed its blade in the blood of a gray old man and his grandchild. I cut thee, pruned thee, and polished thee, and said words of marvellous power over thee, and now, accursed tree, thou refusest to

work the will of thy mistress." And she threw away the staff, and exclaimed, "Go ! be thou a monster, and wallow amid the icy seas, till in thy sides mariners plunge their harpoons, and slay thee, and extract fatness from thee to light up the lamps of sepulchres. Go, such is the punishment of disobedience." The staff flew from her hand, fell in the sea, the water flashed, and Elfin imagined that he beheld it expanding into a dark and immeasurable monster.

A ship splendidly equipped appeared before them; knights and ladies, richly attired, crowded the decks, and minstrels were there, whose harpings, and whose songs echoed over the subsiding billows for many a mile. As the wind moved the perfumed sails, a smell such as the breeze wafts from groves of spice and flowers was diffused over the ocean, and Brunelfin smiled, pleased with a fragrance which reminded him of the scent of the hills of heath where he had sported and sung. "See," said the dame, "how gladsomely these damsels come along the sea to the sound of the harp and the cittern, as if they were in a painted hall among nobles and princes. How hateful a thing beauty and loveliness is, and I would sink that bevy of madams were they what they seem. But they come to aid me in maintaining the empire of my lord and master, and I must welcome them as

I may." And she waved her withered hands and cried, " Mahoun speed you, Mahoun speed you. Go among the sons of men, and tempt them with manifold temptations. When gray age kneels to heaven, appear before him and smile in his eyes, and enter into his heart, and pull his thoughts from above. Lie in the way for the green and headlong youth ; be present wherever he moves, interpose between his sight and all hallowed things, let soft couches and lily beds, and bowers of dalliance haunt his thoughts, till you throw him to the fiends."

" Atrocious hag ! " muttered Brunelfin, " but these nymphs of perdition shall never harm mortal." As he spoke two fierce winds seized the sails of the two ships, and hurried them towards each other. The sails rustled, the masts groaned, and the bows met ; they met, but the ship in which Brunelfin sailed, seemed to meet with no obstruction more than if it had encountered a wave. He looked round and he beheld forms melting in the water, like falling snow, and heard a deep shrill cry.

" Thou cursed creature," said the hag to Brunelfin, " this tempest is of thy creating, and those servants of my master, have returned again to the element out of which they were created, and will do him deeds of usefulness no more." So saying, she seized him

in her arms, and threw him from her, as far as a man may pitch a quoit, into the foaming sea. In a moment the sails of the ship fell as leaves in the frosts of December; the masts melted away, the planks dissolved beneath her feet, and she was plunged into a wide and disturbed sea, without boat or plank, or help at hand. She uttered a wild scream and sunk like lead. “Hurrah!” shouted Brunelfin, bestriding a billow, and dipping his hands in the foam, as if he seized the mane of a watery steed, “Hurrah, hag! canst thou not ride on the chafed ocean, as thou dost on the midnight air, when the moon and stars are startled to behold thee. See how gallantly I go, not a hair of my head is wet, and the foam which hangs in my locks moisten them no more than rain on a swan’s wings. What! art thou sunk altogether? Nay, then, I shall aid thee.”

He dipt his right hand in the sea, and feeling like a boy who gropes for trouts in a stream, muttered: “Cursed Beldame! I know it will enrage my master if I let thee perish, for he loves all creatures which breathe, else this hour were thy last, for many and evil have thy days been on the earth, and man and his joys hast thou sought to wreck continually.” He plucked her up by the locks, and raising her head above the foam, while she sputtered out the searbine, said: “Why thou art a witch of little

wisdom in coming upon the sea in a vessel made by other spells than thine own?" "Other spells than mine own," said she, shaking the foam from her tresses, and seating herself on a billow; "did I not see the spirit of an evil man in the shape of a horse swimming in the bay, and over such my spells have power. Did I not make him into as fair a ship as ever mariners manned? yet some adverse spell has been used to render mine unenduring, and I who have ridden on the racking tempest, flown with the volleyed lightning between earth and heaven horsed on a rag wort; I am now dropt like a star flung from the sky into the salt sea, with no hope of escape but through the tenderness of thee, thou berry-brown Elf."

"The berry-brown Elf," replied he, "returns thee present good for past evil. Didst thou not transform me once into one of thy spell-made steeds, and dash through fifty miles of mire and moor on my back to one of thy infernal trystes? Didst thou not seize my ae sister, and freeze her upon the bosom of St. Mary's lake, till the blessed sun of heaven came and melted her bonds, and she started up mid way to the sky in the ecstasy of liberty? Ah Beldame! now that I have thee seated beside me on the billows, I would act wisely were I to transform thee into a cormorant; but thou

wouldst disturb poor sleeping mariners with thy wild cries. Now make thy choice—whether wilt thou be an oyster or a water serpent? One wave of this little brown hand, and thou never returnest to earth again, save perchance to be eaten by the cormorants of a city corporation in the shape of a fish.” “ My pretty youth, said the hag, in a mild and soothing tone, “ thou art too fair and too tender-hearted to do such deeds as thou describest. If thou wilt go to green England again with me I will make thee Lord of all that proud island. The sweetest of its fruits shall I gather for thee to eat, the fairest of its daughters shall strew thy couch with flowers, the tenderest of its minstrels shall gladden thee with mingled music and poetry, o'er thy head shall I shed the scented dews, under thy feet shall grow roses, and like the summer-loving cuckoo thy path shall be one of sunshine and gladness.” “ You paint a fair picture” replied Brunel-fin. “ Son, said the Beldame, didst thou ever see my child Elfrida? she whom I nursed with the tenderest care, washed every morning in dew caught before it fell, pillow'd on the down of the cygnet, fed with the honey taken from the bag of the bee, and the sweet kernelled nuts, and the fragrant moisture of the rose and the violet. She is the fairest and the purest of the children of the earth; and

to thee alone shall I give her. But why need I speak, thou hast never seen my child, and carest neither for youth nor beauty.

“ Mother,” said Brunelfin, “ I have never loved ; the daughters of men I have looked not on, nor deemed them fair ; my delight is in dancing among the glow-worms in some haunted glen ; in lighting my feet through the wilderness with a will-o’-wisp candle ; in riding during the dewy evening companioned by some shooting star ; and dancing on the foaming billows of the sea when the moon is in eclipse, and the wind is whistling at its loudest. Such are my delights.” “ Ah ! thou hast been kept in slavery, my child,” said the hag, “ and thy heart has never expanded in freedom and in joy. Come with me. When I place my foot amongst the white shells on the shore, I shall create thee a car drawn by steeds fleet as the November wind, and my child shall welcome thee, and hang her white arms round thy neck.”

Brunelfin looked seaward, and said, “ Seest thou aught moving on the sea ? Underneath yon golden and overhanging cloud, dost thou behold a ship, with sails like winter snow ? ” The hag smiled and answered, “ Thine eyes are so accustomed to marvels that thou canst see nothing as it is. I see a fair sea-bird, sailing between the sea and sky, with its white neck held out, its broad wings stretched, and

its flight is towards us." "Then Mahoun protect thee," said the Elf, "I can no longer make the bil-lows bear thee as a steed. Thou seest the tokens of thine assured enemy, whom no wisdom of thine nor cunning of mine can avoid. The hour of thy destruction is at hand, and I shall never see fair Elfrida, nor taste the sweets of creation with her at my side."

"Mahoun, I praise thee," muttered the hag to herself, "the image of youth and beauty which I drew, and the spell which I used, have won this wayward spirit to my service; and were I but on land, the fellest magician of the north should not wile him from me by either wit or spell. My brown and pleasant spirit," she said aloud, "thine eyes are sharper than mine, and the swan which I saw, with outspread wings coming along the waters, is indeed the spell-formed ship of my mortal enemy. One whom I have long hated and feared; one who has contested with me the spiritual rule over shadowy and unsubstantial things, and marred the growth of my master's empire on earth. Ah! but for him the human mind had never revealed its powers by the pen, but lived and glimmered amid the thick darkness of the crypts and recesses of monasteries and abbeys. But for him my master had continued lord of the sea, and prince of the air, and all that is between earth and sky had been

ours. No wonder, therefore, that I hate the magician Michael, and wish his power lessened, and his spells made powerless."

"Mother," said Brunelfin, " thou art keeper of the mists of morning, and the thick darkness of night, and why shouldst thou be dismayed? The billows on which we are seated cannot forsake us, nor refuse to bear us up, since I have thrown a spell upon them." "Thou sayest true, my child," answered she. "Come thick darkness, such as no eye can penetrate, and cover the earth and sea. Come night as grim as the raven's wing, or the wolf's mouth; ascend from the place where eternal darkness reigns, and cast thy mantle around me. If ever I loved to behold thee quench the moon and stars, and hide the land like a shroud, come now and serve me." As she spoke, a thick dark mist emerged from the sea, and rushed rapidly along the billows. It covered sea and land, and filled all the space from the waves to the firmament, with gross darkness, even as a chrystral vase when filled with ink.

"Son," she said, "my power is still unsubdued, it is strong on the waters, and thrice as strong by land, let us therefore begone, lest Michael thy master should dispel the cloud, and sink us amid the sea." As she spoke a flock of cormorants sailed slowly by, shaping their way to the shore.

As they scudded past, Brunelfin lifted water in both hands, and sprinkled it upon the last of the flock, and there arose a painted shallop with silken sails, and seats of velvet. "Mother," he said, "behold the work of my hands, is it not fair and beautiful?" "Fair and beautiful indeed it is, my child," she said, seating herself on the prow, and smoothing her disordered tresses, "but it is still more useful than beautiful, and the art with which thou didst create it, is an art which few know. I also can do something my child." And she took a little box of ivory, no larger than a man's thumb, from her bosom, and removing the lid held it up against the sails of the shallop. In a moment a rushing sound was heard, and the sails which before hung motionless and still, now felt the impulse of a strong and constant wind, and the shallop moved rapidly along.

Brunelfin looked on the ivory receptacle in which the winds lay spell-bound, and held out his hand that he might examine it. "Fair son," said the hag, "it is not every hand that is permitted to touch this treasure. The ivory of which it is made was cut from the horn of an unicorn, as it slept amid the ruins of Tadmor; the little bag with which it is lined is the skin of Mahomet's middle finger, flayed by a knife of elf-flint, while the faithful watched around the body with naked sabres;

and the wind which fills it is part of that tempest which the witch of Sicily sold to Saladin, to drown Richard of England and his nobles. I may not, therefore, trust it in thy hand, lest thy curiosity should let out the wind, and sink us in the ocean."

The shallop, impelled by this magic breeze, glanced like a beam of light from billow to billow, and such was the rapidity with which it ran, that the shore was unseen till the sharp prow sank a fathom deep in the grassy bank, and they stept joyfully ashore. The shallop vanished slowly away. The milk-white sails became as sunshine, and its painted sides grew into the flowery bank, which hemmed in the ocean ; the grass still retained a sea green hue, and the flowers turned their opening blossoms seaward. "Mahoun, I thank thee for this deliverance ;" said the hag, "thy enemy and mine is foiled, and I have deprived him of the fellowship and aid of his active and ancient servant. Aid me farther, I pray thee, and grant my wishes, for thou knowest the strength of Michael the magician, and how subtle and powerful he is. This imp is his right arm, and if I can win his affection the whole Island empire, south of Tweed is mine."

As she muttered this, a gleam of red light came through the darkness ; the thick shroud which covered sea and shore melted away at once ; the sun shone out, and the billows danced in its glow-

ing light for many a league. “ Speed thee and hide thee, mother!” exclaimed Brunelfin, “ for Michael comes—I shall be chained to a rock for seven years, with fifty fathom of salt-water above me; thou shalt be transformed to an oak-tree, the swine of the desert shall wallow under thee, and crunch thy acorns; the axe, the saw, and the adze, will be upon thee, and thou wilt be formed into a ship, to carry slaves.”

“ My son,” said the hag, “ cast fear behind thee, and follow me; into my palace man or spirit cannot come, but with my pleasure; it is surrounded by woods, through which the light of day can hardly penetrate; mountains environ it, where the goat cannot climb, and where the eagle never flew; and it stands in a lake, through which man cannot wade, nor a boat swim. There in my palace sits my fair child: how she will blush to behold thee.” And turning her back to the bay she entered the wilderness, which clothed mountain and plain down to the edge of the ocean. A small stream came tinkling from stone to stone, forming little busy pools, where the trouts leaped in the sun, and played from side to side; a footway seldom trod, and showered along the edge with flowers, winded with the stream; and along this path the hag, followed by her companion, proceeded.

They came to the foot of the mountains, and here the stream, instead of gathering its waters from the scattered springs of the sides or summits of the hills seemed to have cleft the high acclivity in two, and came gushing through it as swift as an arrow, and as pure as melted silver. Below them, the stream glided darkly along, without a shrub or a blade of grass on its border; while overhead the perpendicular sides of the ravine showed a long narrow slip of mid-day sky, in which the stars dimly twinkled, and athwart which the bats flitted about in the twilight obscurity of the dell. At length the light became brighter and the air sweeter, the boughs of trees hung down into the ravine, and wild birds looked down to the murmuring brook, and discontinued their song. The low singing of the wind in leafy woods now came upon the ear, and the amorous moan of the ring-dove was heard without ceasing. They came to a rock, where the way seemed to terminate; for through a hole, no wider than an arrow-slit in a castle tower, it appeared impossible to go; the stream itself spouted through a thousand rifts and fissures, and all access to the interior appeared to be denied.

Brunelfin glanced through the crevice, and exclaimed, "This is the wicket of Paradise! before

me is a lake of silver, and a palace of burning gold ; the ground is covered with flowers, the bushes studded with fruit, and the road is strewn with pearls and precious stones ! How am I to get into the vale of bliss, for assuredly this is it ? ” “ There is a way,” said the hag, “ so follow me.” She entered a recess in the rock, and taking a bundle of dried southern-wood, hyssop, rowan-tree, and a bunch of flowering herbs, she laid them before the opening in the rock, and rubbing two pieces of dried wood with her hands till they smoked and sparkled, she kindled the herbs and flowers. A thin and slender reek at first rose, followed by a bright line of flame, till, seizing on the whole materials, a grosser smoke and broader gleam ascended, and filled all the space where they stood with a sweet and fragrant smell. As the flame arose she said,

Solid and eternal rocks,
Open, 'tis your mistress knocks ;
Stone more hard than hammered brass,
Open, let Brunelfin pass ;
Then shut, that nought its way may find,
That's grosser than the morning wind,
That's stronger than the hempen stalk,
That's heavier than the hunting hawk.
Solid and eternal rocks,
Open, 'tis your mistress knocks.

As she uttered the last words the passage opened to her touch, as if the rocks had been made of green-wood boughs, and then closed behind them, leaving only a narrow slit, through which was seen the long and gloomy pathway, with the descending sun beaming at the extremity, the gliding stream and the impending rocks.

CHAPTER XII.

She princked hersel and prinned herself,
Put red gold in her hair,
And like a white lilie she looked,
Born mid the dewy air.
The white silver was 'neath her feet,
Red gold her head aboon ;
And forth she walked love tryste to keep,
Beneath the summer moon.

OLD BALLAD.

THE valley which opened on Brunelfin's sight was such as he had never seen equalled in beauty, and he had seen all that nature and magic could do. A sun-bright lake was enclosed by a range of green hills, garlanded with ancient trees, amid which the ever-moving red deer trooped in herds, and the ring-doves on the forest tops basked in pairs in the sun. In the centre of the lake was a green island, and in the midst of the isle a bower, which rose brightly over the top of the groves of blossoming shrubs and fruit-trees which hemmed the islet round, and drooped their boughs, glowing with golden apples or powdered plums, to the surface of the water. Wild teals and swans sailed in

pairs in the lake ; the doe came with its fawn to drink at the margin ; while here and there sat a heron, solitary and motionless, its wings closely laid down, and its bill touching its bosom ; a thin slender smoke streamed into the air ; and the sound of a cittern and a sweet tongue, gave a voice of joy to the lonesome land.

“ My son,” said the hag, “ the place which thou beholdest is the residence of Elfrida. Thou art acquainted with sweet sounds and with fair faces ; but the face of my child, and her melodious voice, transcend all thou hast ever heard or seen.” They stood at the edge of the lake, the water was pure as chrystral, and the polished pebbles at the bottom were visible as in a mirror ; it seemed of great depth, and there appeared no boat to bear them over to the islet. “ Thou art a cunning page,” said the hag, and right deftly didst thou find a boat when the ocean denied us one. Canst thou do the same deed of kindness here ? ” “ That I will, and right gladly,” replied he. “ Will you have a bridge of ivory ; or a boat, with masts of silver and sails of silk ? ” “ O ! let us be humble,” she said ; “ give us a simple boat, with a mast of tree.”

He approached a wild swan, which with raised wings, and head laid proudly back between them, came snorting along the margin of the lake.

He threw water upon it, and muttered one of the strongest spells of his master. The swan sailed on, shaking the water from its wings, and uttering a cry, as if it suffered pain; but it underwent no change. "Son, son!" she said, "thy skill has forsaken thee: try another spell." He approached a heron; the solitary bird sat like a stone till the water from his hand fell upon it; then it uttered a loud scream, fell on its back, as its practice is when it wars with the hawk, and lay with its long sharp bill standing up like a lance; but it kept its natural shape. Great was the astonishment of Brunelfin, and not a little his anger, when he perceived that his spells were of no avail; he ran to a tree, rent off one of its boughs, and casting it into the lake, muttered over it one of the spells by which a cockle-shell becomes a gilded barge. The branch, under the influence of the powerful words, writhed as if touched with sudden life; it began to expand, and assume the rude form of a boat. But the spell was faithless, motion forsook it, it crept together, and remained a bough of a tree. "My curse upon bird and bough!" he said, "my skill is gone."

"Be not too much cast down," said the hag, "thy skill is good as far as it goes; I shall do this deed of kindness for thee. Wilt thou go over on a bridge, pass over in a boat, or fly? Say what thou

wilt, and it shall be done.” “ Pass over as thou wilt,” he replied, “ the air and the water are still mine: I can run along the edge of a black cloud, when it contains living thunder; and tread the top of the curling billows when fires flash in heaven, and ships are sinking in the bay;” and he sprung upon the bosom of the lake, and ran over it, while the water trembled and receded to his feet, as infant ice bends to the rash feet of the schoolboy. He reached the shore, and exclaimed, “ Brunelfin can walk on a watery road; the elements are his servants; the burning fire obeys him; the running water stays at his word; and the wind, when he wills it, sings no more in the green-grove top.” He entered the island bower.

The odour of a fire of spice and cedar wood met him at the threshold, and he heard the tinkling of a cittern, and the low warbled words of a soft and melancholy song. He entered a room, the walls of which were of glass, and there, beside a little hearth-fire, sat young Elfrida, her cittern in her hand, and her lips like opening rosebuds, out of which trickled the divine words of an inspired song. A frock of white cloth descended mid-leg down, leaving her feet uncovered, which were whiter than new spring lilies, and seemed made to move to music, so slender was the foot, and so neat was the ankle. Her tresses, as

dark as night, descended over her polished shoulders, and breaking through the glittering restraint of a fillet set with pearls, gushed luxuriantly down, till they flooded the seat whereon she sat and sung.

SONG OF ELFRIDA.

I.

Three summers suns have shone
Since with my love I parted,
Three winters winds have blown,
And I am broken hearted.
He vowed he would return
When July's bloom was blowing,
Yet lonesome maun I mourn,
With eyes for ever flowing.

II.

I sit on the wild shore,
When the surge lies sleeping,
Looking o'er the waves,
And sighing, ay! and wee_{ing}.
O, every shiuning sail
For my love I'm hailing,
Yet every ship that comes
Passes me bewailing.

III.

Once I laughed and sang,
Where was maiden gladder,
Look from shore to shore,
Show me now a sadder.

Gray men blest my looks,
Lads loved to be near me,
Now my sighs would break
Half the hearts which hear me.

IV.

O ! I 'll go build a boat,
And when the stars are glancing
O'er the dimpling waves,
Gladly I 'll go dancing.
I 'll sail round Britain's isle,
And walk wide Erin over,
And every man I meet
I 'll ask him for my lover.

She ceased singing, and said, “ On what wind hast thou come, or through what unknown vein of the earth, for not on feet couldst thou win hither ? ” “ Maiden,” answered Brunelfin, “ neither on the wind did I come, nor through a vein of the earth.” “ Then,” she said, “ thou art not of mortal make, “ for between my dwelling and the rest of the world are placed impediments which nothing but superhuman power could overleap, the fowls of the air, or the spirits of heaven.” “ Indeed, fair maiden,” he replied, “ the spirits of heaven could not well find ought so lovely on earth as thyself; yet the progeny of heaven hold not now, as of old, intercourse with the grosser children of the lower world.” “ Thy sight,” replied Elfrida, “ is bounded in its ken to a stone's cast : thou imaginest that

all forms which this earth contains are grovelling drudges like thyself. Know then, that the loveliest spiritual shapes descend into this lonesome place, and it is not an hour ago since a young and a shining one came down, as a sunbeam drops from a cloud, and walked before me. There was a radiance about his looks alone, such as the morning wears when the sun is rising, though unrisen, and the floor sent forth music to the motion of his feet."

Brunelfin laughed, till the bower echoed. "Ah ! my simple Elfrida," he said, "know ye not that shapes of hell can wear the hues of heaven ; and that the evil spirits who are permitted to infest the earth, can hide their horrors in human shape. Even now I behold a dark spirit walking amongst the trees of thy garden. Lo ! look how fair and how innocent he seems. To you, Elfrida, he appears as from above. See ! he draws near."

As Brunelfin spoke there came to them a fair stripling—some eighteen years old he seemed ; a pair of silver sandals glittered on his feet ; and his uncovered ringlets, brown and long, descended, waving on his shoulders ; a white mantle was fastened round his neck with a clasp of gold ; and in his hand he held a rod, such as shepherds use. "Good even, fair Elfrida," he said, "and good even to thee, Goblin : thou hast come a long way,

nor has all thy journey been by land. What wants the drudging page to the foul magician here?" Up rose, Elfrida, as the youth spoke, and standing by his side, exclaimed, "Art thou the elfin drudge of the magician of the north, that meteor spirit which infests sea and land? From thee—nay, from thy mighty master—I deemed this solitude secure. Begone, lest my mother come, and mischief overtake thee."

Brunelfin laughed, and shouted, and waved his long sinewy arms in the air. The stranger exclaimed, "Art thou deaf? Must I use my strength, and repel thee from a presence of which thou art so unworthy?" "Unworthy, I own," replied Brunelfin, with a laugh; "but worthier far than thou. Elfrida is fair, and I am brown; but thou—thou—who art thon? Swart spirit, cast off that borrowed shape, that stolen lustre; appear in the darkness of the pit, with thine eyes like burning coals, thy locks like hissing snakes, and the howling of hell behind thee." He changed, as Brunelfin spoke, into a fiend, dark, fearful, and deformed, and rolling himself together vanished away, making the bower tremble, as if a thunderbolt had passed over it.

Elfrida threw an armful of her tresses from her bosom, which heaved with agitation, as if it would have burst the seven jewelled laces which enclosed

it. “ I thank thee, Elfin, for this good deed—thou hast come and saved me from loving one of the fiends. Truly didst thou say, that the reprobate spirits could put on the likeness of good angels, and appear decked in the hues of heaven. But here, in good time, comes my mother ; alas ! how sad and disconsolate she looks.” Brunelfin gazed on her as she approached, and saw the fire of anger sparkling in her eyes, and that her whole frame was agitated.

“ Cursed am I from this moment,” she exclaimed, “ if I own the sovereignty of Satan more ! Cursed be my right hand, if it charms milk from the flocks ; and cursed be my left, if it sheds mur-rain again among the cattle ! A faithful and labo-rious servant have I been. I have gathered the midnight dews from the blasted heath ; scraped the bloody rust from the murderer’s gibbet ; fol-lowed the fox, till it wiped its gory mouth on the witch gowans, that I might pick the lucky posie ; pursued the raven, till the feather fell from its startled wing ; hunted the heron, till I took the frog from its mouth, and plucked the third lith from its backbone—and all to form a spell strong enough to hinder the sown corn to shoot, the ewe to have lambs, the fruit-tree to bear blossom, and the egg of the farm-yard fowl to quicken under the wing. Behold how I am rewarded ! The child,

whose very shadow is dearer to me than mine own soul, has been tempted and besieged by a foul spirit, who came in the celestial likeness; and had I not come on the wings of the wind, and brought one whose strength was mighty with me, my Elfrida had been even now as loathsome as the toad, which crawls under its cold stone from the sight of the blessed sun."

"Mother, my blessed mother!" said Elfrida, "it is true an evil spirit came and tempted me in the shape of heaven; but rejoice, rather than curse, for I fell not into temptation, though fair and comely he looked, and though his words were sweeter than the first breeze breathed over a new-opened rose." "Ah! my child," said her mother, "little dost thou know my pangs of heart, when I found that the evil spirit had put his cursed spell on the lake round thy bower, and that the enchanted island moved not to the side to receive me. But the evil one was foiled, the spell dissolved, and the green isle received my feet once more."

"Mother," said Elfrida, taking the harp from the wall, "let me chase sadness from your brow." And she passed her fingers, white, long, and round, over the strings of the instrument, and a pleasant sound arose, fit to chase sorrow from all cheeks, dry the tears in all eyes, and expel woe from all bosoms. Brunelfin waved his sun-burned sinewy

arms over his head, and danced with gladness. "Daughter," said the dame, "cease thy music, the good deed is done; squander not the divine sounds of thine immortal instrument. My daughter's harp was framed by good spells, and the heavens consented when the magic strings were added to the enchanted frame. Great is the might of this wondrous instrument; it can harp honey out of the rock; fruit from a barren bough; fish from the stream; gold from the gripe of a miser; and the bride from the arms of the bridegroom. At midnight its voice can call the sun to the sky, and the summer flowers to the wintry ground. If you touch its first string, the birds cease their songs, and the deer stands still in sight of the hunters. The second string brings food to your lips; the third string brings wine; the fourth string gives you the speed of the hunted hart; the fifth string adds the wings of the eagle; and the sixth string gives you power over all your enemies. When you touch the seventh string, those you love will come from the uttermost ends of the earth, and follow."

"It is a glorious harp," said Brunelfin, and as he spoke he laid his hand upon it. A sudden wind shook all the strings, and there came a sound so sweet, so melodious, that Brunelfin who had skill in music, spiritual as well as mortal, never felt the

influence of sound so deeply before. “Fair harp,” he said, “thy frame of ivory and gold, and thy strings which respond so divinely to the touch, have been framed by a glorious artist, for never in the earth beneath, nor in the air above, nor in the palaces under the sea, have I heard ought so ravishing.” “Son,” said the hag, “lay not thy hand too rudely on the instrument, lest the strings should be disordered, and the spell should dissolve.” “Fear not,” he said, “for I shall touch it with an affectionate hand.”

He rose as he spoke, and standing on the threshold of the bower, struck one of the strings. The isle moved lightly over the water, even as the down from the bosom of the swan, and touched the green bank. He touched the second string, and the hills which enclosed the vale seemed to cleave asunder, and a wide and well wooded way led from the place where he stood, into the bosom of the country. He touched a third string, and two steeds sprang from the ground, and coming to his side stood willing to be employed, and neighed and pawed impatient for the road.

“Fair son,” said the hag, “the harp in thy hands has virtues which it possesses not in mine, and I marvel much how thou hast been able to discover merits which to me were unrevealed. From this enchanted vale I deemed there was no

escape, and lo ! the road is made, and the steeds are ready. It has still one undiscovered virtue which I would gladly show thee ; and then thou mayst begone if thou wilt. She snatched the harp from his hand, turned herself thrice round, and with a hurried hand touched string after string. The isle moved back into the centre of the lake ; the hills lately rent asunder, became solid ground ; and the two steeds vanished from their places, and made the waters of the lake fly into the air as they disappeared. “ There ! ” she said ; “ thou treacherous imp, all thy spells are unable to help thee over that deep flood ; and all thy magic power will fail to carry thee over these enchanted hills. Abide with me, and love my child, and thou shalt be superior to the princes of the earth, and the powers of the air. Refuse it ! and beneath this bower there is a pit, and in that pit there is a chair, and upon that chair shalt thou be placed by a strong enchantment, which no might less than that of heaven can dissolve, and there shalt thou be seated till doomsday.” And she knit her brows and stamped with her foot, till the whole bower quaked.

Elfrida looked on her mother, and became deadly pale ; but Brunelfin laughed and said, “ I refuse thy offer to remain here, but I accept the gift of thy fair daughter. Among all the children of

men, have I never seen a creature so lovely. In no little islet shall our dwelling be; but amid the fragrant breezes of the wilderness shall we wander, on the green hill tops, shall we find our seats, and by the sweet streamlet banks shall we stray : when the moon is in its summer glow.” “Have I brought thee hither,” exclaimed the hag, “to rebel against my will, and to tempt my child into the wilderness of the world, among evil and impure spirits, and unprincipled mortals? Go to thy punishment, false creature;” and striking him with her harp, she pushed him from the threshhold, and stamped with her foot, saying, “Open earth, and receive an unblessed morsel.” The ground quivered and gaped, and disclosed a dark cavern, into which with a power he sought not to resist, she pushed him; the ground closed over him, and shut him out from the light of heaven and all its fresh air.

Brunelfin laughed till the darksome cavern rung again; “Doting hag, dost thou think thou hast power to confine one of the most subtle of all the spirits below, to this magic abode?” A voice at his side said, “Thou wilt find her power strong enough to detain thee; and think not that we shall loose the subtle servant of our immortal enemy from the chair of fate. No, down, down, the chains

which will be soon woven around thee as a net, cannot be dissolved.

Brunelfin looked, and he beheld amid the gloom of the rocky cavern, into which he was descending, two dark and undefined shapes, who hovered like sentinels at his side; and at every step he took waxed more frightful and huge. “Shadowy and unembodied beings,” he said, “was it from your lips that threatenings came? Did you imagine that words which are of no more weight in either earth or heaven, than an echo or the sighing of the wind, would daunt or alarm me. Go on, shew me this fated chair, heap spell on spell, charm on charm, exhaust all the potent witchery of her who employs you, and see how vain it will all prove.”

The cavern expanding as he advanced, began to form into something like architectural shape and proportions; the sides became more perpendicular the roof grew more arched, while along the walls stood rows of dark and gigantic figures shaped out of the solid rock, yet worn with time, and exhibiting in their forms the appearance of having contended against the elements for more than a thousand years. As far as he could see he beheld gigantic statues all standing in the attitude of meditation. A faint light glimmered over their faces. He came to a little streamlet which moved slug-

gishly across the cavern; flowers which seemed so stiff and white as if cut in marble grew along the brink. “Behold that rill,” said one of the guides; “its waters are sweet and delicious; sorrow when it tastes forgets its misery; age forgoes its years, and man is renovated and restored to the original dignity of his nature—a little below the Gods.”

“Truly,” answered Brunelfin, “the water shall not run to waste: let me complete your shapes; why should nature send her half made-up forms to scare the world, when this divine stream can finish her imperfect works.” So saying, he lifted water in the hollow of either hand, and throwing it right and left, exclaimed, “Appear as nature intended you should—divine or devilish.” The shapes on which the water fell were shrivelled together in a moment; a faint cry was heard; and there stood in their place, two figures clothed in darkness; their feet and heads were bare; their locks curled like serpents, their eyes gleamed like live coals, and they cried out, “To us is given power over you, to bind so that none shall loose, welcome to the valley of Oblivion; one of the seven entrances to the infernal pit.”

“Contemptible wretches,” replied Brunelfin, “think not that I am deceived by the semblance which ye have assumed of immortal though repro-

bate spirits. Appear in your natural shapes, and then leave my presence." He waved his hand right, and he waved his hand left, and the two dark and deceitful shapes were instantly changed into forms like those of the children of men, yet they seemed equally fierce, moody, and merciless. "Go," said he, "return to earth, and hear the unmitigated curse of mankind pronounced upon your names. In the palace hear the scoff, in the hall the jest, and in the cottage the curse, and feel if you can what the weight of unworthiness is. Go—I name not your names. It is enough that I know the one betrayed his country, and the other oppressed and destroyed an intellect endowed with the riches of heaven. Begone, know that ye have purchased eternal infamy; fly to the uttermost ends of the earth, and the voice of immortal scorn and loathing shall reach you." They vanished as he spoke, and he walked onwards with no other companions than those melancholy sentinels who stood like columns on either hand.

The cavern terminated; at the extremity was a chair of stone raised upon steps fit for receiving one of the immense figures which sentinelled the place, and before it stood a foot-stool of the same materials on which was impressed the mark of a sandal, corresponding in magnitude with the colossal dimensions all around. As he looked one

of the statues moved his hand, set forward his foot, and rolled his eyes ; he went to his side, and said, “ I know thee, no deceit shall avail thee, speak, else I shall pain thee with seven transformations. Into a toad loathsome and poisonous shall I charm thee ; into a serpent, that the shepherd’s foot may crush thee ; into a hawk, that the fowler’s snare may destroy thee ; into one possessed of an evil spirit, that the law of the land may torture and burn thee ; into an oyster, that thou mayst be alike insensible to good or evil ; into a wizard’s staff, that thou mayst blaze away through the air bearing an un-blessed load ; and finally, into a bishop’s mitre, that thou mayst press proud brows, and sit on the seat of vanity and spiritual pride, without hope of enclosing meekness and humility.”

“ I pray thee,” said the figure, “ use thy power with gentleness, and I shall use mine with mercy. Hither was I sent to place thee in that chair, that thou mightst sit in judgment for a thousand years upon all the souls of men who are doomed to descend by the seventh mouth of Tophet into eternal punishment. But the spirits who guarded thee down have neglected their charge, and it is left for me to see thee seated there with honour, and to bring the wandering spirits before you, that good judgment may be given.”

Brunelfin stood unmoved in the presence of his gigantic adversary, and said :—“ That chair is prepared for one mightier than I, and I have no wish to fill the place of one noble in form and profound in judgment. The deep thought the opinion extracted from contradictory testimony, and the patient and laborious consideration of deeds of dubious import are not for me ; and I would rather fly like a blast of western wind among the green hills of the earth, or move like a restless wave of the ocean from shore to shore, than be judge of the seventh postern of the bottomless pit. Farewell, I return to upper air.” “ I pray thee,” said the other, “ to abide and take the state upon thee to which thou art ordained ; stay of thine own free will, else I shall call up the powers who dwell around, before whom all thy might shall be as a willow in the wind.” He stalked from his place as he spoke, and clasping his enormous hands round the body of Brunelfin, lifted him from the floor, and advanced towards the chair. A tremendous cry was raised all along the sides of the cavern, it seemed as if every gigantic statue clapped its hands and uttered a shout of joy.

Other sounds followed, for Brunelfin dashed his gigantic adversary into the chair as if he had discharged him from an engine. Chair, footstool,

and figure, went headlong down, and a sudden and fierce light burst fitfully through the aperture illumining the vault from extremity to extremity. He gazed down the descent, the figure was still falling, and amid the distant and dusky flames appeared ten thousand grim upturned faces, smiling at the coming of a new companion into the vale of eternal punishment. He turned round and beheld the whole grove of statues animated into life, their faces writhing with agony, their hands clutching the air like creatures dying, and their stony lips moving like those of men muttering deep and fearful curses. “The cursed head” he said, “which imagined you, and the cursed hands which fashioned you, are now suffering the punishment of those who work wickedly. Your work is done, so dissolve away, nor leave a memory of what you have been behind. Of such miscreated shapes I shall not speak when I return amongst the children of men ?

“ Yet dissolve not wholly away. Leave a mark behind, were it only to give employment to the dull and obtuse intellects of idle men, who, unable to make the world wonder with aught they can do or say on the surface of the earth, descend into her bowels and describe their discoveries in a language fit to confound a sorcerer. On these strange lineaments shall some learned man, armed with a steel

hammer, and words harder than an earth-fast flint descant for seven seasons. In them shall he behold the forms of a mightier world, a progeny of creatures prodigious in stature; he will write the history of a long line of kings, and endow them with the gathered wisdom of three universities. Kings will admire, princes stare, and the apostle of idle conjecture shall be rewarded while genius will starve.” And he laughed loudly, and ascending in haste spoke the words of power which sever the solid ground, and in a moment he stood at the threshold of the enchanted bower in the solitary isle.

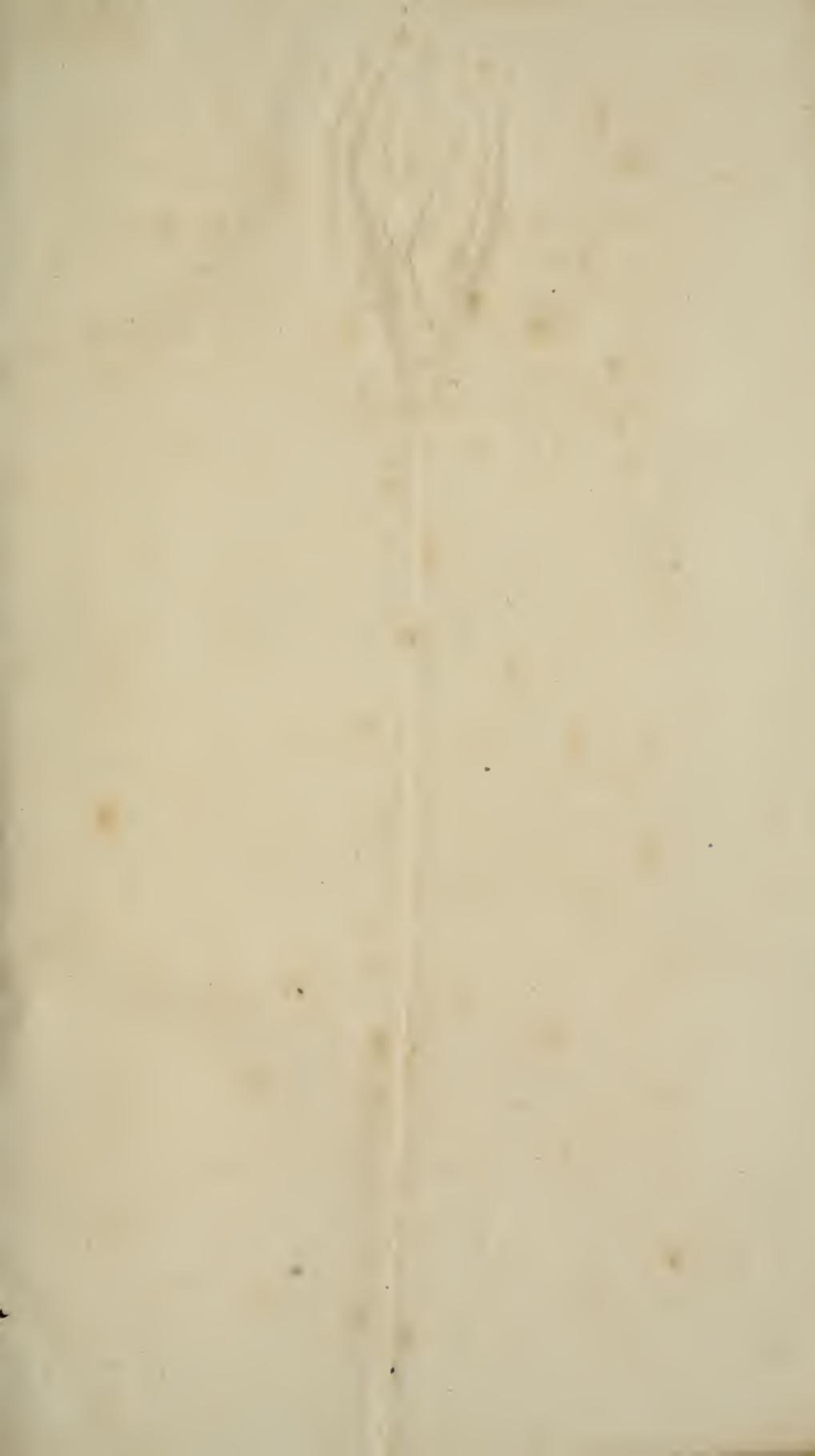
He entered with a smile, Elfrida sat with her magic harp in her hand, a blush was on her cheek, and moisture was on her long dark eye-lashes. “I expected never to behold thee again,” she said; “to this fair isle many have come, all youths fair and comely, and many have gone, but none save thyself have returned.” “I come Elfrida,” he said, “to show thee the way from this enchanted isle, and to lead thee among the children of men. I shall build thee a bower on the banks of some sunny stream, where we can charm the shepherds with song and with music, and gather the gladsome faces of mankind around us.” “I would rather,” said she, “that we were to abide in this sweet and silent place. My step-dame is stern indeed, but I know the way to

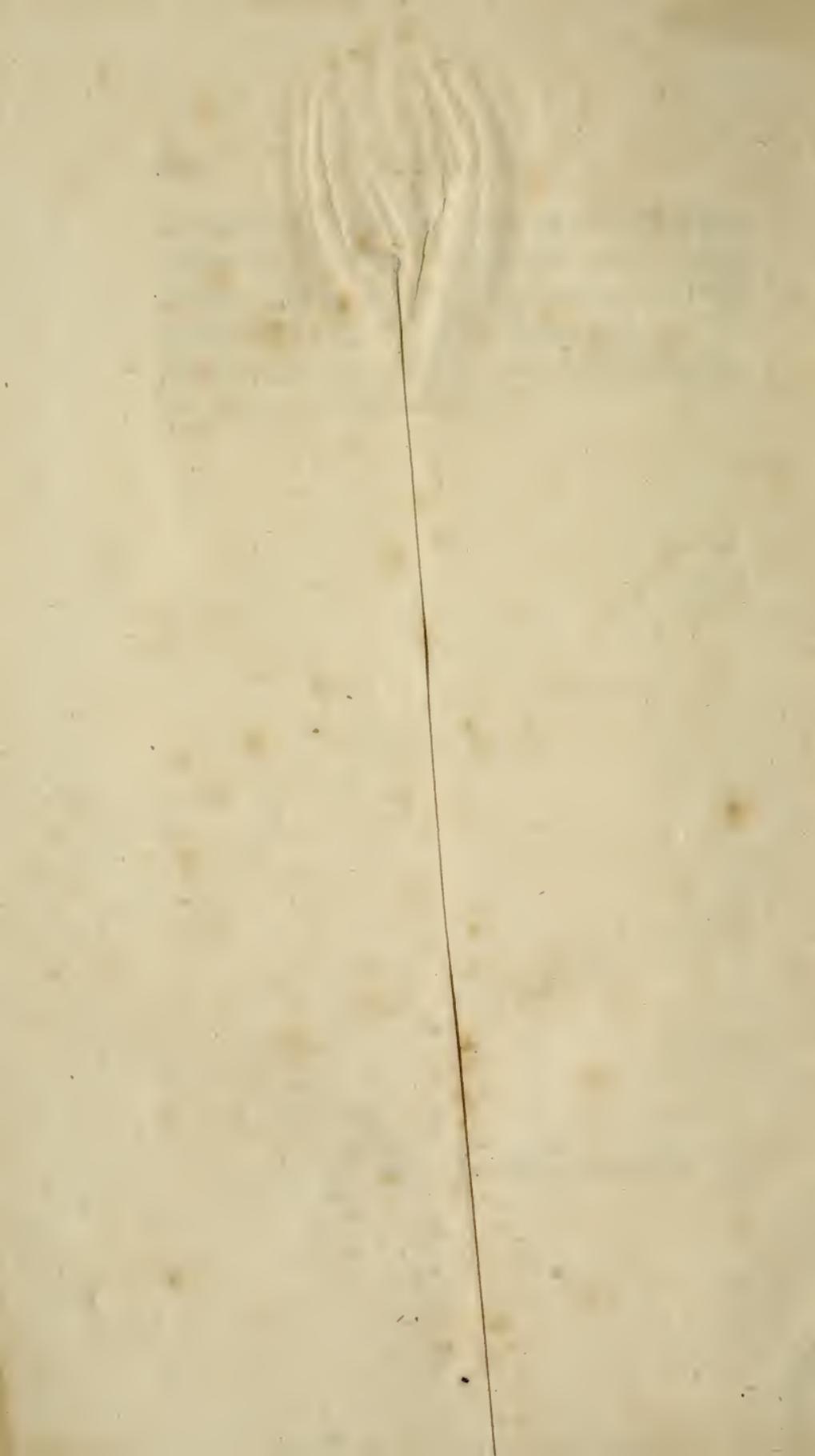
soothe her." "Thou wilt never need to soothe her more," he said; "she has passed from green earth, of which she was long unworthy, and is now where the innocent and blessed will never be."

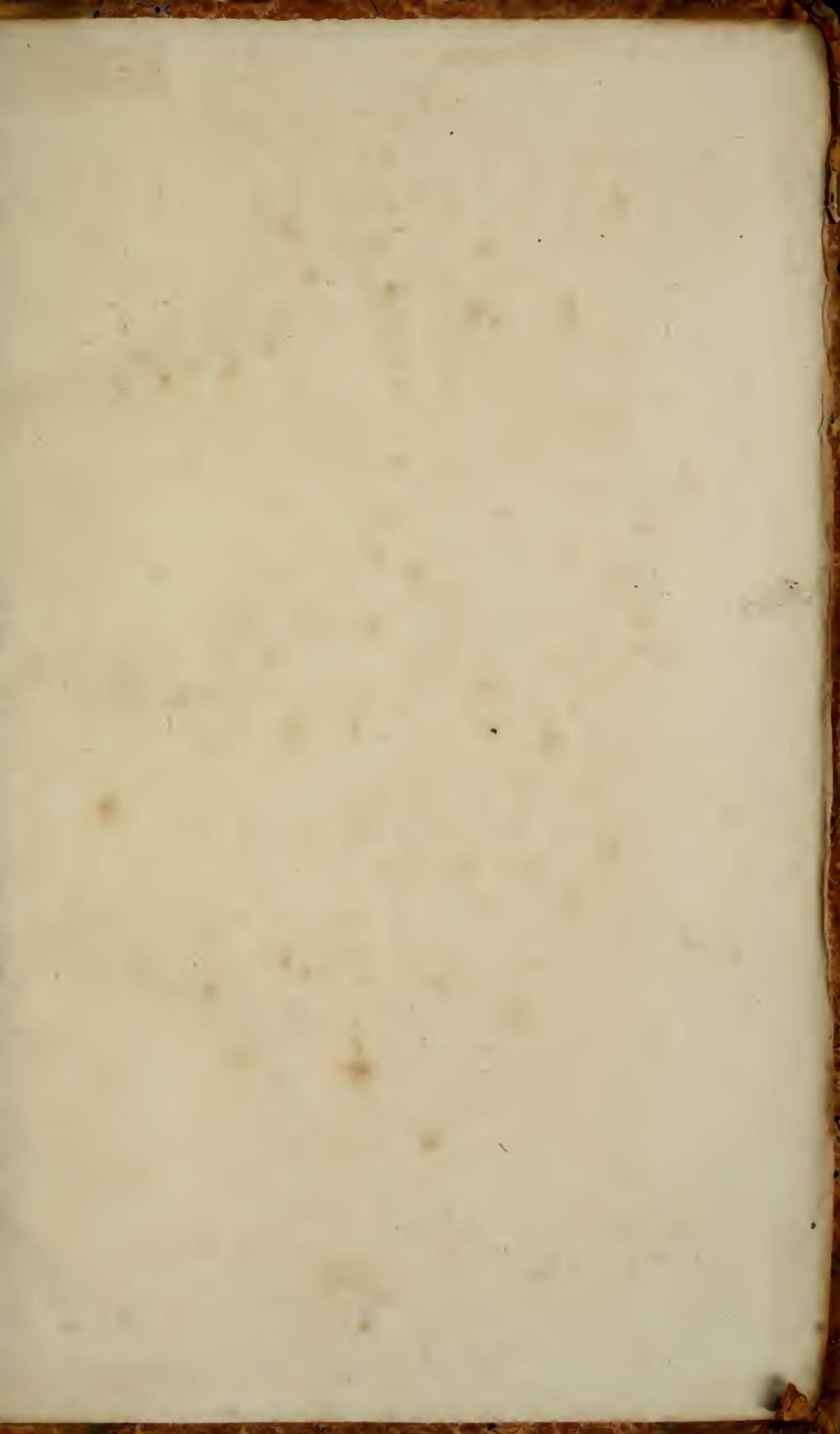
Elfrida turned her head away, and the tears began to find their way through among her fingers long, and white, and round, with which she covered her face. When she looked up the bower was become a summer sheal thatched with long green rushes, the floor was bedded with the same verdant covering, the lake was become a little rivulet, in which the mottled trouts went darting to and fro in the sun, and the steep and inaccessible hills which hemmed it in were gentle mounts covered with green sward and white over with sheep. "My sweet one," said Brunelfin, "behold what thy enchanted land was, even in its fairest moments, the spell which covered it with false beauty is dissolved for ever. But here we must not abide." He stamped on the ground, and Elfrida saw with wonder a palfrey whiter than snow standing at her side, and one black as the wing of the raven by the side of Brunelfin, so they leaped on and departed. She carried the magic harp in her hand, and threw back her ringlets over her shoulders; they danced on the back of the snowy palfrey, or wantoned on the wind, while she sometimes took them up in an armful, and allowed them to gush

out again singing all the while, and touching her harp with a tender and gladsome hand. “ Let us seek,” said her companion, “ the presence of my great master, and pray for my liberty, he cannot refuse the wish of a faithful servant, and the request of a creature so fair as Elfrida.”

END OF VOL. I.







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